



ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

Vision: Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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ASMFC Summer Meeting

August 6 - 8

The Westin

1800 South Eads Street

Arlington, VA

Preliminary Agenda

The agenda is subject to change. Bulleted items represent the anticipated major issues to be discussed or acted upon at the meeting. The final agenda will include additional items and may revise the bulleted items provided below. The agenda reflects the current estimate of time required for scheduled Board meetings. The Commission may adjust this agenda in accordance with the actual duration of Board meetings. Interested parties should anticipate Boards starting earlier or later than indicated herein.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 6

8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

Executive Committee

(A portion of this meeting may be a closed session for Committee members and Commissioners only)

- Consider Policy Addressing Non-Payment of State Assessments
- Consider Proposed Revision to the Annual Report
- Update on Transitioning the For-hire Telephone Survey to State/ACCSP Conduct
- Discuss Commission Involvement in Biosecurity and Bait Sources

10:15 a.m. – Noon

South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board

- Consider Approval of Atlantic Cobia Amendment 1
- Progress Update on Draft Addenda for Atlantic Croaker and Spot Traffic Light Analyses
- Review and Consider Approval of 2019 Fishery Management Plan Reviews and State Compliance Reports for Atlantic Cobia, Atlantic Croaker, and Red Drum

Noon – 1:15 p.m.

Legislators and Governors' Appointees Luncheon

1:30– 2:30 p.m.

American Eel Management Board

- Review Board Working Group Recommendations on Addressing Coastwide Cap Overages
- Review and Consider Approval of Aquaculture Proposals

SUMMER MEETING PRELIMINARY AGENDA, continued on page 6

Upcoming Meetings

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as the deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and diadromous species. The fifteen member states of the Commission are: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Robert E. Beal,
Executive Director

Patrick A. Campfield,
Science Director

Toni Kerns,
ISFMP Director

Laura C. Leach,
Director of Finance & Administration

Tina L. Berger, *Editor*
Director of Communications
tberger@asmfc.org

703.842.0740 Phone
703.842.0741 Fax
www.asmfc.org
info@asmfc.org

July 22 (begins at 1 PM) & 23 (ends at Noon)

SEAMAP South Atlantic, Florida Fish & Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI), 100 8th Ave SE, St. Petersburg, FL

July 23 (begins at 1 PM) & 24 (ends at Noon)

Joint SEAMAP Meeting, FWRI, 100 8th Ave SE, St. Petersburg, FL

July 25 (1 - 3 PM)

Horseshoe Crab Advisory Panel Conference Call; see <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/7/2019/horseshoe-crab-advisory-panel-conf-call/1405> for more details

August 6 - 8

ASMFC Summer Meeting, Westin, 1800 South Eads Street, Arlington, VA

August 13 - 15

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Courtyard Philadelphia Downtown, 21 N. Juniper St., Philadelphia, PA

August 19 (1 - 5 PM)

Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment Subcommittee and Ecological Reference Points Workgroup webinar; see <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/8/2019/Atl-Menhaden-Stock-Assessment-Subcomm-and-Ecological-Reference-Points-Workgroup-Conf-Call-/1421> for more details

August 19 (1:30 - 3:30 PM)

ASMFC & MAFMC Spiny Dogfish Advisory Panel Webinar; see <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/8/2019/asmfc-and-mafmc-spiny-dogfish-advisory-panel-webinar/1413> for more details

August 26 (9 AM - Noon)

ASMFC & MAFMC Bluefish Advisory Panel Webinar; see <http://www.mafmc.org/council-events/2019/bluefish-ap-webinar-aug-26> for more details

August 29 (9 AM - 1 PM)

Assessment Science Committee Conference Call; see <http://www.asmfc.org/calendar/8/2019/assessment-science-committee-conf-call/1416> for more details

August 29 (10 AM - 3:30 PM)

ASMFC & MAFMC Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Advisory Panel; DoubleTree by Hilton BWI, 890 Elkridge Landing Road, Linthicum Heights, MD

September 16 - 20

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Town and Country Inn, 2008 Savannah Highway, Charleston, SC

September 24 - 26

New England Fishery Management Council, Beauport Hotel, Gloucester, MA

October 8 - 10

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Durham Convention Center, 301 W. Morgan Street, Durham, NC

October 27 - 31

ASMFC Annual Meeting, Wentworth by the Sea, 588 Wentworth Road, New Castle, NH

November 19 - 21

SEDAR 58 Atlantic Cobia Peer Review Workshop, location to be determined.



A Continued Commitment to Restoration and Management Can Make a Difference for River Herring

In June, NOAA Fisheries announced the findings of its status review of alewife (*Alosa pseudoharengus*) and blueback herring (*Alosa aestivalis*) stocks (collectively referred to as river herring) along the Atlantic coast. The status review, performed under the auspices of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), determined listing these species under the ESA is not warranted at this time.

The review noted while river herring have declined from historical numbers and overutilization remains a risk while population numbers are low, fisheries management efforts at the state and federal levels have helped reduce the risks from fishing mortality. In particular, implementation of Amendment 2 to the Commission's Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Shad and River Herring, which requires the closure of state river herring fisheries without an approved sustainable fisheries management plan, has been central in managing fishery impacts to these species.

The Commission's 2017 River Herring Stock Assessment Update was an important component of the status review. The Update found while population abundance of river herring within certain rivers continues to be depleted, other river systems are showing signs of improvement, with increasing abundance trends for a number of rivers in the Mid-Atlantic and throughout New England. Although abundance in these river systems remains at low levels, dam removals and improvements to fish passage have had a positive impact on run returns.

- On Maine's Penobscot River, the removal of two dams and the installation of fish passage at others opened nearly 1,000 miles of habitat to migratory fish.
- On Maryland's Patapsco River, the removal of Bloede Dam, a linchpin of a decades-long restoration effort that also included the removal of Simkins and Union Dams, restored more than 65 miles of spawning habitat for blueback herring, alewife, American shad, and hickory shad in the watershed, and more than 183 miles for American eel. In total, Maryland's Fish Passage program has completed 79 projects, reopening a total of 457 miles of upstream spawning habitat in Maryland since 2005.
- In May 2016, the first dam upstream of the confluence with the Hudson River was removed from the Wynants Kill, a relatively small tributary in Troy, New York, downstream of the Federal Dam. Within days of its removal, hundreds of river herring moved past the former dam location into upstream habitat. Subsequent sampling efforts yielded river herring eggs, providing evidence that river herring were actively spawning in the newly available habitat. This dam removal provides an additional 192 acres of spawning habitat for river herring that has not been available for 85 years.

- In Connecticut, where there are over 500 dams within the historic range of river herring, fishway construction and dam removals have restored access to previously blocked spawning habitat, allowing for increased production. Since 1990, 11 dams have been removed and 53 fishways have been constructed throughout Connecticut, with more projects being completed each year.
- In Pennsylvania, dam removals and fish passage installations have opened up 100 river miles to migratory fish. Other states, such as New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and Delaware have invested in the use of fish passage techniques to aid in river herring restoration by re-opening acres of freshwater spawning and nursery habitat for the species.

While the findings of the status review are encouraging, we still have a long way to go until these species are fully rebuilt throughout their range. A variety of threats, including dams and other barriers to fish passage, continue to limit species recovery. Since 2012, the Commission has partnered with NOAA Fisheries on a number of initiatives to aid in the restoration of river herring populations. These include providing state and local agencies with restoration project funding, leading to dam removals and fish passage improvement projects; coordinating the River Herring Technical Expert Working Group to increase public awareness about river herring and foster cooperative research and conservation efforts; and working with the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils to establish shad and river herring catch caps in fisheries that are known to incidentally capture these species. The continued recovery of river herring demands the states and our federal partners continue our commitment to improve management policy in tandem with habitat restoration.

Later on in this issue, you can read more about river herring life history, commercial and recreational fisheries and management, as well as some innovative research by scientists at East Carolina University who are exploring the use of environmental DNA to aid in species monitoring.

The continued recovery of river herring demands the states and our federal partners continue our commitment to improve management policy in tandem with habitat restoration.

State Management Aiding in Recovery of Depleted River Herring Stocks; NOAA Fisheries Status Review Finds Endangered Species Act Listing Unwarranted

Introduction

The Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Shad and River Herring, approved in 1985, was among the first FMPs to be developed by the Commission. Since that time, the Commission has undertaken three major amendments to the plan. Amendment 2, approved in 2009, ushered in a new management regime for these important forage fish; one that required Atlantic coastal states and jurisdictions to either document the sustainability of their fisheries or prohibit recreational and commercial fishing for river herring. A 2017 stock assessment update determined that while river herring remain depleted on a coastwide basis, improvements have been observed in several river systems. This update provided significant rationale for NOAA Fisheries' June 2019 status review, which determined that listing river herring under the Endangered Species Act was not warranted at this time. Despite the species' overall low abundance, state management, including dam removals and improvements to fish passage, have helped increase abundance in some locations along the East Coast.

As river herring are migratory species that traverse both state and federal waters, the Commission has also worked closely with the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils (MAFMC and NEFMC, respectively) to reduce river herring bycatch in small-mesh fisheries. In June 2019, NEFMC established catch caps in the Atlantic herring fishery for 2020-2021 to reduce incidental harvest of river herring, while MAFMC is currently developing Framework 13 to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP to set 2020-2021 catch caps for the Atlantic mackerel fishery.

Life History

River herring, which is the collective term for alewife and blueback herring, are anadromous fish that spend the majority of their adult lives at sea, but return to freshwater areas to spawn in the spring. Alewife spawn in rivers, lakes, and tributaries from northeastern Newfoundland to South Carolina, but are most abundant in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. Blueback herring prefer to spawn in swift flowing rivers and

tributaries from Nova Scotia to northern Florida, but are most numerous in waters from the Chesapeake Bay south.

Mature alewife (ages three to eight) and blueback herring (ages three to six) migrate rapidly downstream after spawning. Juveniles remain in tidal freshwater nursery areas in the spring



Photo (c) Jerry Prezioso, NOAA Fisheries

Species Snapshot



Alewife

Alosa pseudoharengus

General Characteristics

- Adults average 10-11" in length; 8-9 oz. in weight
- Range from Nova Scotia to South Carolina
- Primarily feed on plankton
- Congregate in large schools, numbering in the thousands
- Excellent food fish, marketed both fresh and salted

Interesting Facts

- In the US, alewife are known as sawbelly, grayback, bigeye, and freshwater and spring herring. In Canada, they are known as gaspereau or kiack.
- The origin of the name alewife is a reference to the large belly of the fish, which reminded New England fishermen of alehouse wives.
- The Latin name *pseudoharengus* means "false herring."



Blueback Herring

Alosa aestivalis

General Characteristics

- Adults average 11" in length; 7 oz. in weight
- Range from Nova Scotia to Northern Florida
- Primarily feed on plankton
- Name derived from dark blue/bluish gray coloring on back

Interesting Facts

- Blueback herring are also known as summer herring or black belly.
- Blueback herring have teeth on the roof of their mouths, while alewife do not. The teeth disappear with age.

Stock Status

Varies by river system for both species; see Table 1 on page 10

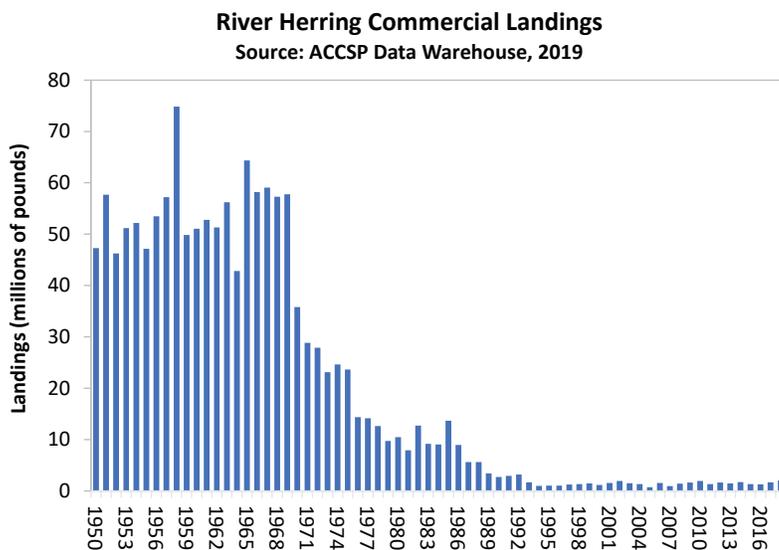
and early summer, but may also move upstream with the encroachment of saline water. As water temperatures decline in the fall, juveniles move downstream to more saline waters. Little information is available on the life history of juvenile and adult river herring between their emigration from freshwater to the sea and their return to their natal river to spawn.

Commercial and Recreational Fisheries

River herring supported one of the oldest documented fisheries in North America, including significant commercial, recreational and subsistence fisheries throughout their range. During colonial times, in-river stocks of anadromous species like river herring became subject to intensive exploitation as well as habitat degradation related to clear-cutting for timber, damming for mills, and wetland conversion to agricultural lands. For Massachusetts, the decline in coastal alewife fisheries had become so extensive that between 1790 and 1860 regulations were adopted for most Massachusetts rivers to manage in-river alewife fisheries. In North Carolina, river herring were the most economically important finfish harvested during the late 1880s, but by 1918 Atlantic menhaden had become more economically viable than river herring.

River herring have shifted from being used as a major local food source for human consumption in the form of smoked, salted and/or pickled fish toward being used primarily for fishmeal, pet food ingredients, and bait for commercial and sport fishing. During the 20th century, river herring also supported a small commercial bait industry in the New England states. These harvests declined considerably throughout New England between the turn of the 20th century and the 1980s.

Commercial landings for both species have declined dramatically from historic highs. Domestic landings reached their peak in 1958



THE RIVER FISHERIES OF THE ATLANTIC STATES.
Haul-seine fishing at Sutton Beach, Albemarle Sound, North Carolina: a large haul of alewives. (Sect. v. vol. I, p. 636.). From a photograph © NOAA Fisheries.

at 74.9 million pounds, while total landings by domestic and foreign fleets peaked at 140 million pounds in 1969. Since 2000, domestic landings have totaled less than two million pounds in any given year, with a historic low of 733,605 pounds landed in 2005. Landings in 2018 were estimated at two million pounds, a 19.3% increase from 2017 levels.

Although recreational harvest data are scarce, most harvest is believed to come from the commercial industry.

Stock Status

The 2012 river herring benchmark stock assessment evaluated the species on a river-by-river basis where data were available. For the vast majority of rivers, insufficient data were available to conduct a model-based stock assessment. Instead, trend analysis was used to identify patterns in the available fishery-dependent and independent data sets. Of the 52 stocks of alewife and blueback herring assessed, 23 were depleted relative to historic levels, one was increasing, and the status of 28 stocks could not be determined because the time series of available data was too short. Estimates of abundance and fishing mortality could not be developed due to lack of data. The “depleted” determination was used instead of “overfished” and “overfishing” because many factors, not just directed and incidental fishing, have contributed to the low abundance of river herring.

The 2017 stock assessment update indicates that river herring remain depleted at near historic lows on a coastwide basis. Total mortality estimates for 2013-2015 are generally high and exceed region-specific reference

continued, see RIVER HERRING on page 10

Summer Meeting Preliminary Agenda (cont'd)

2:45 – 3:30 p.m.

Horseshoe Crab Management Board

- Consider Potential Management Response to the 2019 Benchmark Stock Assessment
- Review and Consider Approval of 2019 Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance Reports

3:45 – 5:15 p.m.

Atlantic Menhaden Management Board

- Progress Update on Menhaden Single Species and Ecological Reference Point Benchmark Stock Assessments
- Review and Consider Approval of 2019 Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance Reports
- Set 2020 Atlantic Menhaden Fishery Specifications

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7

8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board

- Review 2019 Performance of the Stocks Report
- Review and Consider Approval of ISFMP Guiding Documents
- Update on American Lobster Enforcement Vessel
- Committee Reports
- Consider Noncompliance Recommendations (If Necessary)

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Committee on Economics and Social Sciences

- Review Ongoing Committee Activities
- Discuss Efforts to Increase the Availability and Use of Socioeconomic Information in Management
- Review Committee Input on the Commission's Draft Risk and Uncertainty Policy

10:30 – 10:45 a.m.

Business Session

- Consider Approval of Atlantic Cobia Amendment 1
- Consider Noncompliance Recommendations (If Necessary)

11:00 a.m. – Noon

Spiny Dogfish Management Board

- Consider Approval of Draft Addendum VI for Public Comment
- Review and Consider Approval of 2019 Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance Reports

12:45 – 3:30 p.m.

Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board

- Review Potential Black Sea Bass Commercial Management Strategies and Consider Initiating Management Action to Address Commercial Allocation
- Progress Update on the Recreational Management Reform Working Group
- Update on Management Strategy Evaluation of Summer Flounder Recreational Fishery Project
- Report from the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership/Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Project: Characterizing Black Sea Bass Habitat in the Mid-Atlantic Bight
- Discuss Discard Mortality

3:45 – 4:45 p.m.

Tautog Management Board

- Review Implementation Guidelines for the Commercial Harvest Tagging Program
- Review and Consider Approval of 2019 Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance Report

Public Comment Guidelines

For issues that are not on the agenda, management boards will continue to provide opportunity to the public to bring matters of concern to the board's attention at the start of each board meeting. Board chairs will use a speaker sign-up list in deciding how to allocate the available time on the agenda (typically 10 minutes) to the number of people who want to speak.

For topics that are on the agenda, but have not gone out for public comment, board chairs will provide limited opportunity for comment, taking into account the time allotted on the agenda for the topic. Chairs will have flexibility in deciding how to allocate comment opportunities; this could include hearing one comment in favor and one in opposition until the chair is satisfied further comment will not provide additional insight to the board.

For agenda action items that have already gone out for public comment, it is the Policy Board's intent to end the occasional practice of allowing extensive and lengthy public comments. Currently, board chairs have the discretion to decide what public comment to allow in these circumstances.

In addition, the following timeline has been established for the submission of written comment for issues for which the Commission has NOT established a specific public comment period (i.e., in response to proposed management action).

1. Comments received 3 weeks prior to the start of a meeting week will be included in the briefing materials.

2. Comments received by 5 PM on Tuesday, July 30th will be distributed electronically to Commissioners/Board members prior to the meeting and a limited number of copies will be provided at the meeting.

3. Following the July 30th deadline, the commenter will be responsible for distributing the information to the management board prior to the board meeting or providing enough copies for management board consideration at the meeting (a minimum of 50 copies).

The submitted comments must clearly indicate the commenter's expectation from the ASMFC staff regarding distribution. As with other public comment, it will be accepted via mail, fax, and email.

SUMMER MEETING PRELIMINARY AGENDA, continued on page 7

Employee of the Quarter: Mike Rinaldi

Mike Rinaldi, Fisheries Data Coordinator with the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Fisheries Statistics Program (ACCSP), was named Employee of the Quarter for the second quarter of 2019. Mike first started at the Commission in May 2017 in a seasonal position to help with recreational data coordination and management as the ACCSP worked with the states to assume conduct of the Marine Recreational Information Program's Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS). From the outset, Mike's strong work ethic, diligence and dedication stood out and within six months he was promoted to Fisheries Data Assistant and later to his current position.

For the past several months, Mike has been working with ACCSP partners on implementing the new confidentiality application, an essential component of the ACCSP's Data Warehouse. As the lead staff member on confidentiality, he quickly familiarized himself with the application, database tables, and procedures. He good-naturedly piloted both the security contacts and end users through the new system. Despite the bugs, he supported the security contacts in such a way that, instead of complaining about the system, they complimented him on his efforts and

patiently waited as issues were resolved. He demonstrated creativity and judgement by instituting personal processes to accommodate for the situation and ease the lives of users regardless of the extra work to himself. His work with the contractor exhibits outstanding technical knowledge and proficiency.

In addition to this project, he continued to effectively multi-task on other important tasks. Significant among these is his excellent work on the updates to the fish and shellfish common names within the ACCSP Data Warehouse. Due to his comprehensive review of the existing names and structured approach to the necessary standardization, multiple committees were easily able to absorb a great deal of information and approve the changes. The communication scheme he established has kept all partners and users informed and allowed time to incorporate changes from partners and implement updates across the ACCSP. This procedure will serve as a model for future

communications with partners. Mike's dedication and knowledgeable approach have contributed substantially to the quality of ACCSP data and the program's interactions with its partners. In appreciation of his efforts, Mike received a cash award and a letter of appreciation to be placed in his personal record. In addition, his name is on the plaque displayed in the Commission's lobby. Congratulations, Mike!



SUMMER MEETING PRELIMINARY AGENDA, continued from page 6

THURSDAY, AUGUST 8

8:30 – 11:30 a.m. Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

- Consider Approval of Draft Addendum VI for Public Comment
- Consider Postponed Motions from April 2019:

Main Motion: Move to initiate an Amendment to the Atlantic Striped Bass Fishery Management Plan to address the needed consideration for change on the issues of fishery goals and objectives, empirical/biological/spatial reference points, management triggers, rebuilding biomass, and area-specific management. Work on this Amendment will begin upon the completion of the previously discussed Addendum to the Management Plan.

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Mr. Clark.

Motion to Amend: Move to amend to add reallocation of commercial quota between states.

Motion made by Mr. Pugh and seconded by Mr. Reid.

- Review and Consider Approval of 2019 Fishery Management Plan Review and State Compliance Reports

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **Lunch**

12:30 – 5:00 p.m. **NOAA Fisheries Wind Power Workshop for New England and Mid-Atlantic Commissioners**

Researchers Explore Use of eDNA to Survey River Herring

Researchers at East Carolina University (ECU), with funding provided by the Commission and NOAA Fisheries, are exploring a new way to survey river herring (i.e., alewife and blueback herring) using Environmental DNA (eDNA).

The use of eDNA for biological research and monitoring is relatively new. eDNA is DNA collected from a variety of environmental samples such as soil, water, or even air, rather than directly sampled from an individual organism. As various organisms interact with the environment, DNA is expelled and accumulates in their surroundings. Example sources of eDNA include, but are not limited to, mucus, gametes, shed skin, feces, and carcasses.

Researchers Erin Field, Michael Brewer, and Roger Rulifson from ECU's Department of Biology have already completed a pilot study in North Carolina's Chowan River watershed, corroborating the presence of river herring eDNA with actual river herring presence using electrofishing. Recently, they conducted a study in collaboration with the

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries in two Massachusetts watersheds (Mystic River and Monument River) to calibrate eDNA methodology with highly accurate fish counts. Hatchery fish studies to measure eDNA shedding and decay rates

Commission. By comparing fish abundance using eDNA quantity and shedding rates with traditional fish counting, the researchers will assess the validity of the new method. The eDNA method can then be applied to other understudied watersheds in the Mid-Atlantic.

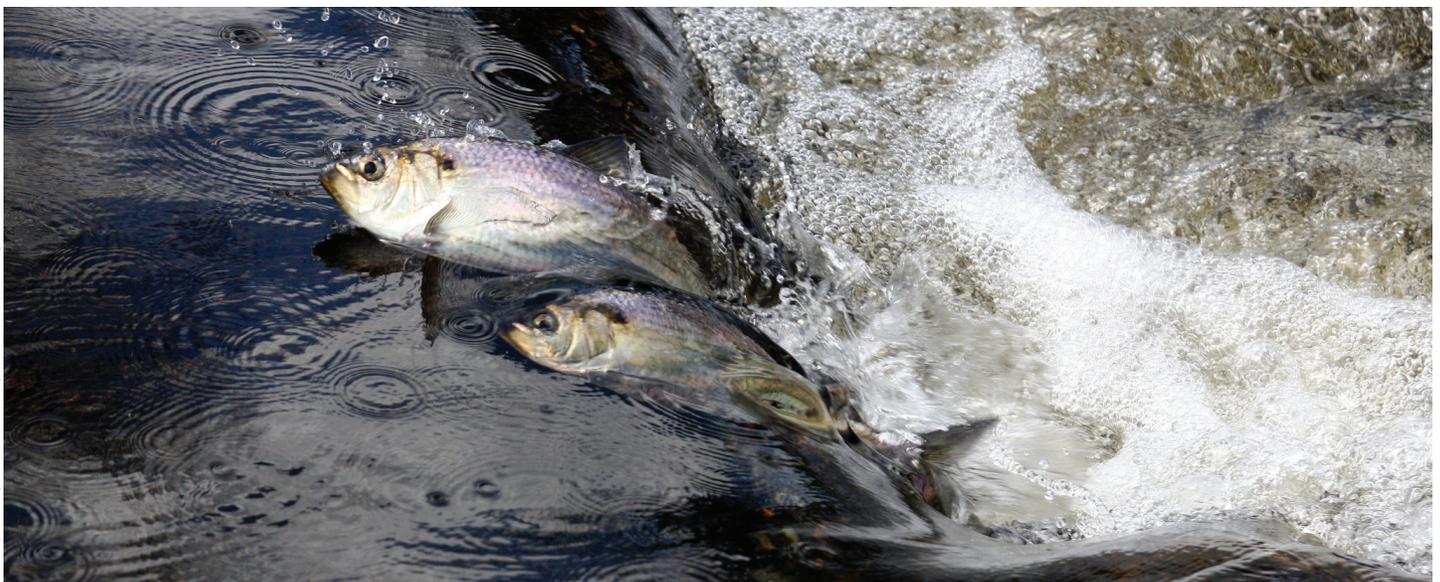


ECU Master's Student Seth Gibbons sampling at the Edenton Fish Hatchery (Edenton, NC).

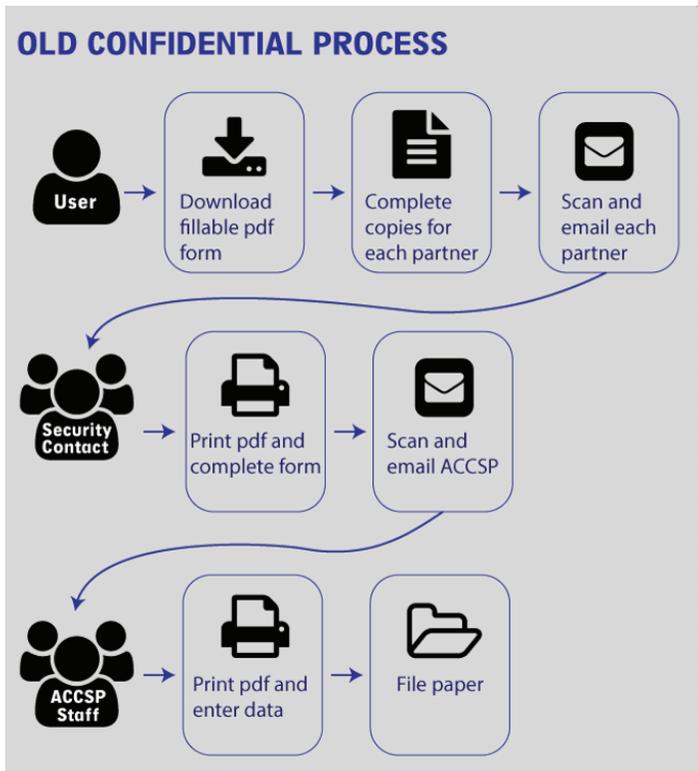
in collaboration with the USFWS Edenton Fish Hatchery (North Carolina) were also conducted to help develop a quantitative methodology using eDNA. These techniques were then applied to the Neuse River in North Carolina in collaboration with the North Carolina Wildlife Resource

“Being able to rapidly monitor spawning habitats is essential for developing and monitoring conservation efforts, sustainability, and population growth.” says Erin Field. “In Mid-Atlantic watersheds, traditional survey methods are more difficult due to high turbidity, large run sizes, and vast watersheds. The ability to provide information for previously unsurveyed areas will not only be useful for stock assessments, but will also help us better plan restoration and remediation efforts to bring back river herring.”

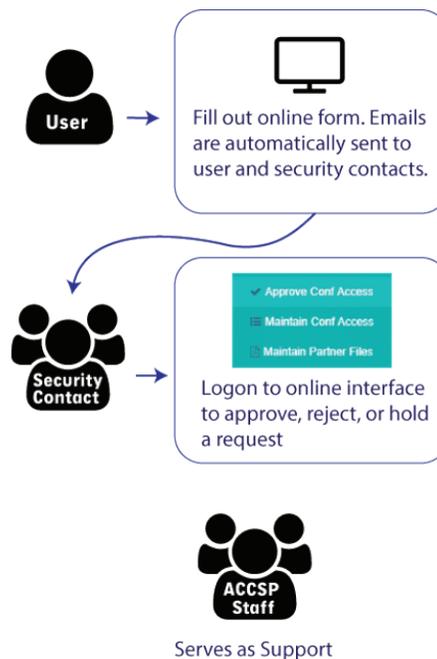
For more information, please contact Erin Field, Assistant Professor with the ECU Department of Biology, at FIELD14@ECU.EDU or visit <http://www.efieldlab.com/research.html>.



Migrating river herring. Photo (c) Greg Wells



NEW CONFIDENTIAL ACCOUNT PROCESS



The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Fisheries Statistics Program (ACCSP) has completed updates to its Confidential Fisheries Data Access application. The application represents one of the most integrated, modern, and easy-to-use account management systems for fishery-dependent data access. Instead of a lengthy process involving paper non-disclosure agreements and manual data entry, users and data security contacts are able to interact via multiple pages within the application.

Users can set up accounts, submit requests, or renew existing access with only a couple of clicks. They can view their existing confidential access and any pending requests. Contact information is auto-populated on the request page, thereby streamlining the process and

removing the potential for error. Renewal options are limited to partners for whom the user's access expires within the year. This eliminates duplicative requests and reduces the burden on data security contacts.

Administrators have the ability to respond to requests, manage access to their data, and upload additional non-disclosure agreements or other email attachments. All of these actions are reliably archived within the ACCSP system, making review and audit significantly easier.

The Confidential Fisheries Data Access application is directly integrated within the ACCSP Data Warehouse. Once a user receives confidential access approval, it is immediately reflected in their ability to query partner data in the portal. The

dynamic link between the confidential and report applications facilitates a fully electronic and efficient information management system for Atlantic coast fishery-dependent data.

WHAT ARE CONFIDENTIAL DATA?

Confidential data are data that can lead to the identification of individuals or individual contributions. Federal and state laws prohibit the disclosure of confidential data, and the ACCSP works diligently and tirelessly to protect proprietary information. The Program Partners of the ACCSP define confidential data using the 'rule of 3' for commercial catch and effort data. This rule requires that any publicly disclosed data summary must include contributions from three dealers, three fishermen, and three vessels to be considered non-confidential.



ACCSP is a cooperative state-federal program focused on the design, implementation, and conduct of marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and the integration of those data into a single data management system that will meet the needs of fishery managers, scientists, and fishermen. It is composed of representatives from natural resource management agencies coastwide, including the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the three Atlantic fishery management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the D.C. Fisheries and Wildlife Division, NOAA Fisheries, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. For further information please visit www.accsp.org.

**Abundance Trends of Select Alewife
and Blueback Herring Stocks along the Atlantic Coast**
Source: 2017 River Herring Stock Assessment Update

points for some rivers (see Table 1 on page 10). However, there are some positive signs of improvement for some river systems. Total mortality estimates for two rivers have fallen below region-specific reference points for 2013-2015, compared to zero mortality estimates below the reference points at the end of the 2012 stock assessment data time series. Of the 54 stocks for which data were available, 16 experienced increasing abundance, two experienced decreasing abundance, eight experienced stable abundance and ten experienced no discernable trend in abundance over the final ten years of the time series (2006-2015).

Atlantic Coastal Management

In 2009, in response to concerns regarding declining river herring populations, the Commission’s Shad and River Herring Management Board approved Amendment 2 to the Interstate FMP. The Amendment has prohibited commercial and recreational fisheries in state waters since January 1, 2012 unless the state or jurisdiction implemented a Board-approved sustainable fishery management plan (SFMP). A sustainable fishery is defined as “a commercial and/or recreational fishery that will not diminish the potential future stock reproduction and recruitment.” The plans must describe sustainability targets that are achieved to prevent closure of the fishery.

To date, SFMPs have been approved for Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, and South Carolina. Amendment 2 also requires states to implement fishery-dependent and -independent monitoring programs, and contains recommendations to member states and jurisdictions to conserve, restore, and protect critical river herring habitat.

Federal Action

In support of the sustainable management actions taken by the Commission, both the MAFMC and NEFMC took action regarding the incidental catch of river herring and American shad in federal waters (3-200 miles from shore). MAFMC implemented its first annual cap on incidental catch of river herring and shad in the U.S. Atlantic mackerel fishery in 2014.

This catch cap was one of several protective measures implemented through Amendment 14 to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP. The Amendment also increased reporting and monitoring requirements for fishermen and dealers. MAFMC is currently developing 2020-2021 catch caps for the Atlantic mackerel fishery through Framework Adjustment 13 to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish FMP. In 2014, NEFMC implemented annual river herring and shad catch caps through Framework 3 to Amendment 5 to the Atlantic Herring FMP. The catch cap applies to all trips landing more than the open access possession limit of 6,600 pounds of Atlantic herring. In June 2019, NEFMC maintained the current catch caps for 2020-2021.

In June 2019, NOAA Fisheries published its status review of alewife and blueback herring stocks along the U.S. coast, which determined listing these species under the Endangered Species Act is not warranted at this time. The review noted that while river herring have declined from historical numbers and overutilization remains a risk for reduced populations, fisheries management efforts at the state and federal levels have helped to diminish the impacts of fishing mortality. For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

State	River	Trends (2006-2015)
NE U.S. Continental Shelf (NMFS Bottom Trawl)^		Increasing ^{A,B}
ME	Androscoggin	Increasing ^A
	Kennebec	Increasing ^{RH}
	Sebasticook	Increasing ^{RH}
	Damariscotta	Increasing ^A
	Union	No Trend ^A
NH	Cocheco	Increasing ^{A,B}
	Exeter	Stable ^{RH}
	Lamprey	Increasing ^{RH}
	Oyster	Decreasing ^{RH}
	Taylor	No Returns ^{RH}
	Winnicut	Unknown ^{A,B}
MA	Mattapoissett	Increasing ^A
	Monument	Increasing ^{A,B}
	Nemasket	Increasing ^A
	Parker	Stable ^A
	Stony Brook	Unknown ^A
RI	Buckeye	Increasing ^A
	Gilbert	Stable ^A
	Nonquit	Decrease ^A
CT	Bride Brook	Increasing ^A
	Connecticut	Stable ^B
	Farmington	Unknown ^{A,B}
	Mianus	No Trend ^A , Increasing ^B
	Mill Brook	No Trend ^A
	Naugatuck	Unknown ^{A,B}
	Shetucket	No Trend ^A , Stable ^B
NY	Hudson	Increasing ^{RH}
NJ, DE, PA	Delaware	No Trend ^{A,B}
MD, DE	Nanticoke	Stable ^A , No Trend ^B
VA, MD, DC	Potomac	Stable ^A , Unknown ^B
VA	James	Unknown ^{A,B}
	Rappahannock	No Trend ^A , Increasing ^B
	York	Unknown ^{A,B}
NC	Alligator	Unknown ^{A,B}
	Chowan	No Trend ^A , Stable ^B
	Scuppernog	Unknown ^{A,B}
SC	Santee-Cooper	No Trend ^B
FL	St. Johns River	Unknown ^B

^ANE shelf trends are from the spring coastwide survey data which encounters river herring more frequently than the fall survey. A = Alewife only; B= Blueback herring only; A,B = Alewife and blueback herring by species; RH = alewife and blueback herring combined.