

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

Atlantic Herring Technical Committee

Conference Call Summary: Draft Addendum VI and Nantucket Shoals/Georges Bank Spawning Study July 22, 2013 2:00 – 2:30 PM

Present: Renee Zobel (NH F&G, TC Chair), Micah Dean (MA DMF), John Lake (RI DEM), Matt Cieri (ME DMR), Lori Steele (NEFMC), and Melissa Yuen (ASMFC).

Summary

The Atlantic Herring Technical Committee (TC) held a conference call to review Draft Addendum VI to Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Herring, and discuss the task for expanding the Nantucket Shoal/Georges Bank spawning study (motion passed on October 2012).

1. Draft Addendum VI

Draft Addendum VI complements the New England Fishery Management Council's Framework Adjustment 2. The public comment period ended on July 19, and the Section will consider this draft addendum for final approval at the ASFMC Summer Meeting.

Overall, the present TC members unanimously supported the alternative options for each of the issues because they are consistent with the Council's proposed management measures in Framework 2. The options supported by TC members are listed below.

3.1 Seasonal Splitting of Quota for Areas 1B, 2, and 3

The TC supports **Option 2:** *Allow states to seasonally split the sub-ACLs in all management areas to maximize value to the Atlantic herring fisheries. The actual splits (amounts or percentages by months, trimesters, or seasons) would be set as part of the specifications process.*

3.2 Quota Rollover for All Management Areas

The TC supports **Option 2:** *Allow for up to 10% of unused quota in a management area to carry over to the first fishing season after final landings data are available, within that same management area, provided that the ACL is not exceeded for the entire fishery. The stock-wide ACL will not be changed from the annual specification. Unused quota may only be rolled from one season to the next within the same year. This adjustment for areas with unused quota is intended to provide some flexibility to the fishing industry.*

3.3 Harvest Control Measures: Trip Limit Triggers

The TC supports **Option 2:** *This option establishes triggers to close directed fisheries in a management area when 92% of the sub-ACL is projected to be reached, and then close the stock-*

wide fishery when 95% of the total ACL is projected to be reached. A 2,000 pound bycatch allowance will continue when the directed fishery is closed.

3.4 Specification Process for Sub-ACL Triggers

The TC supports **Option 2:** *Sub-ACL triggers will be set using the annual specification process.*

2. Georges Bank/ Nantucket Shoals Offshore Spawning Study

The Atlantic Herring FMP Coordinator reminded the TC of the task set by the Section during the 2012 ASMFC Annual Meeting (October 2012). The task is to expand on the white paper¹ with 1) specific budget needs for resources, such as personnel and transport; 2) alternative sampling measures; and 3) possible management options for offshore spawning areas. The Section will consider the TC's advice if funding becomes available for this study. The task is due at the ASMFC Annual Meeting (October 2013).

The TC concluded that the existing sampling methods used for inshore spawning analysis would not apply to offshore sampling, because of the challenges of keeping samples fresh during the transport back to labs for analysis. States will need to design new sampling protocols for collecting fresh specimens in Area 3 (Georges Bank) for gonadosomatic indexing (GSI) before management options can be developed. Therefore, to fulfill the task, TC members will provide each state's budget estimates for the development of a new offshore sampling protocol, collection of samples, and analysis.

Comments include:

- TC members would like managers to clearly state their goals and objectives for the study and implementation of management measures.
- Currently, states' spawning research is used to inform management of inshore spawning areas. The fish must be fresh for accurate reading of the GSI. This presents a challenge for offshore sampling because it takes days to transport the fish. For the purposes of offshore sampling, the TC advises that a new sampling protocol needs to be designed, which requires staff and resources.
- Spawning behaviors in Georges Bank can be very different than inshore spawning events, which may require a whole different set of management measures. The TC cannot advise management options without an understanding of offshore spawning.
- A TC member questioned the use of state funding for offshore spawning research in federal waters. Priority should be placed on portside sampling.
- The Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act funding is typically used by states to fund ongoing programs, and should not be considered as additional funding for a new study on Georges Bank/ Nantucket Shoals spawning.

¹ Potential issues and considerations with Georges Bank/Nantucket Shoals offshore spawning area: Report to the Atlantic Herring Section from the Technical Committee (October 2012).