



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee Meeting Summary

Conference Call
December 21, 2015

Technical Committee Members: Nicole Lengyel (Chair), Alexei Sharov, Carol Hoffman, Charlton Godwin, Edward Hale, Ellen Cosby, Gary Shepherd, Gary Nelson, Heather Corbett, Kevin Sullivan, Kevin Dockendorf, Kurt Gottschall, Michael Kaufman, Wilson Laney, Jill Ramsey

ASMFC Staff: Max Appelman, Katie Drew

Public: Joe Cimino, Mike Celestino, Beth Versak, Jessica Best, Angela Giuliano, Derek Orner

The Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee (TC) met via conference call to (1) elect a Vice chair, (2) discuss TC tasks from the November Board meeting, (3) discuss the 2018 benchmark assessment timeline and tasks, and (4) review items for the February Board meeting.

(1) Two Vice chair nominations were received; Ed Hale (DE) and Kevin Sullivan (NH). After short discussion, Kevin was elected as Vice chair.

(2) The TC was tasked with conducting a 2016 stock assessment update utilizing catch and index data through 2015. Gary Nelson discussed the timeline and tasks for the update. State compliance reports are due June 15, so as long as all state data is assembled by the end of June the assessment would be completed sometime in August and available for Board review at their November meeting. One concern mentioned was how to handle the selectivity pattern with only one year of data under a new regulatory regime. This may require additional discussion down the road. Gary indicated that he would like volunteers from the Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SASC) to assist in data organization and execution of the models, to which some members assured they are capable and willing to assist with any tasks. As a follow up, **Gary will provide a list of tasks that SASC members could help out with for the 2016 update, and Staff will circulate that list to the TC.**

(3) Nicole Lengyel reviewed a list of tasks and tentative timeline for the 2018 benchmark assessment. Members discussed the possibility for MRIP to undergo changes to their survey design in 2017, and subsequent changes to estimates of total landings. Whether or not these changes will take effect in 2017, and the repercussions of those changes in regards to the assessment, is not clear. The TC may need to reconsider age-length keys, catch at age matrices and other data to reflect the MRIP changes. The ASMFC Policy Board is aware of this possibility considering that there are other species assessments being conducted in 2017/2018 that could be impacted by these changes. **This scenario will have to be monitored, however the assessment will continue as scheduled.**

Wilson Laney commented on whether or not there is enough acoustic tagging data available to pursue a telemetry tagging model for the assessment. Members commented that there might not be sufficient data for mortality estimates, but could be for migratory analysis. The TC agreed that this discussion should be put on the agenda for the first data workshop and that the SASC should be charged with the task of looking into what types of data would be available, and how much. It was suggested that Dave Secor may be able to provide insight since he has conducted migration related studies with Atlantic sturgeon. **Staff will contact Dave and request an update to the TC on his work.** There was also a suggestion to bring in outside help for migration modeling. **Staff will follow up Toni Kerns to see if there is room in the budget to do so.**

Members then discussed the need to identify the data gaps in the sex ratio data. It was mentioned that quite a bit of sex-specific data exists, but there are certainly spatial gaps. Ideally, sex-specific data from both fisheries dependent and independent sources would be incorporated in the assessment. Members noted that many recreational fishermen are enthusiastic to help out and the TC could reach out to CCA or ALS to see if they could help collect data in their programs to include sex data. As an immediate next step, **the TC concluded that states should provide metadata of the sex-specific data available by March 2016 so that additional data collection could still be conducted if necessary. A template to supply metadata will be distributed to the TC.**

Members then discussed improving discard estimates since this issue has been raised repeatedly in the past. It was mentioned that ACCSP has a bycatch prioritization committee that has identified a lot of data sources that people didn't know existed. Nicole Lengyel volunteered to check with the committee for data on striped bass discards.

Moving forward, Nicole Lengyel will put together a list of tasks for the 2018 benchmark so that members can volunteer to lead or help on tasks where they feel they most qualified and able. **The benchmark is scheduled for fall 2018 SARC.**

(5) The TC discussed items for the February Board meeting. The Chair reviewed one of the agenda items regarding discussion of the tabled motion from the November meeting to revisit the Addendum IV regulatory changes for 2016. This was purely informational since there was no Board directed tasks for this, but was important to explain to the TC since it suggests the potential for the initiation of an addendum.

Maryland submitted an Addendum IV conservation equivalency proposal for their 2016 recreational fisheries which requires TC comment prior to Board approval. Alexei Sharov presented an overview of the proposal and noted that all but one of the proposed regulations had already been reviewed and approved by the TC prior to implementation in 2015. The other option was adopted from Delaware's conservation equivalency proposal (also approved by the TC) for MD's coastal fishery. It was explained that due to limited samples and since the MD coastal fishery is a small area in close proximity to DE, MD staff felt that DE's data is much more applicable for the analysis than MD's. PRFC then stated that they would match whatever MD implements and asked for TC approval to follow suit. **The TC approved both MD's proposal and PRFC's request with consensus.**

(6) Lastly, the TC discussed other business. Wilson Laney gave an update about the 2016 Cooperative Tagging Program. Funding was received for the full program this year, but after 2016 there is no funding for the trawling portion. The hook and line component is funded for at least the next five years. **It was suggested that there should be discussion with ASMFC to see if there is a need to continue the trawling portion beyond 2016 as other ASMFC managed species are also collected during the cruise.**

Alexei Sharov gave an update on 2015 striped bass harvest data to date as it related to Addendum IV, which required a 25% harvest reduction compared to 2013 estimates. It was noted that this preliminary data did not include dead discards and only included data through wave 4.