



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

1050 N. Highland Street • Suite 200A-N • Arlington, VA 22201
703.842.0740 • 703.842.0741 (fax) • www.asmfmc.org

ASMFC Shad & River Herring Technical Committee Call Summary

April 5, 2016

Technical Committee Members: Mike Bailey (USFWS), Josh Tryninewski (PA FBC), Mike Dionne (NH F&GD), Bryant Bowen (GA DNR), Heather Corbett (NJ DFW), Genine Lipkey (MD DNR), Bill Post (SC DNR), Joe Swann (DC DOE), Jeremy McCargo (NC WRC), Eric Hilton (VIMS), Reid Hyle (FL FWCC), Holly White (NC DMF), Phil Edwards (RI DEM), Wilson Laney (USFWS), Brad Chase (MA DMF), Ken Sprankle (USFWS), Jacque Benway Roberts (CT DEEP), Ruth Hass-Castro (NOAA/NMFS), Ray Rhodes (College of Charleston), Oliver Cox (ME DMR)

ASMFC Staff: Jeff Kipp and Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Public: Jared Flowers (NC DENR)

The Shad and River Herring Technical Committee (TC) met via conference call to discuss the following items: 1) stock assessments for river herring and American Shad 2) River Herring.com and the website's utility moving forward 3) receive an update on the Data Collection Standardization Workshop and Report and to 4) Elect a TC Chair and Vice Chair. Below is a summary of their discussion.

1) Discuss assessment schedule & type of assessments for River Herring

-Jeff Kipp presented to the group the current process for establishing the schedule for the River Herring and American Shad assessments over the next few years (Assessment Science Committee timetable provides recommendation to Policy Board; Policy Board considers it at the May 2016 Spring meeting) as well as the types of assessments both species could go through (benchmark stock assessment or assessment update). The main distinction is that a full benchmark stock assessment is usually only warranted if there is new data sources that could/should be included and whether there are new assessment approaches that weren't available previously. For river herring, a Coastwide Depletion Model was used in the 2012 assessment, with river-specific catch analysis. Given NOAA's request for River Herring Assessment to be completed in 2017 due to the timing of when a review of the 2013 ESA non-listing review deadline, river herring is scheduled for an assessment update in 2017 and American shad in 2018. However, there is no explicit recommendation on assessment type or when it should be completed by for American shad (previously not a component of the assessment report). As the group was in agreement with having an assessment update for river herring next year, the main question posed to the group was whether American Shad should go through a full benchmark stock assessment in 2018.

-Bill Post noted that as a result of Amendment 2 (River Herring; 2009) and Amendment 3 (American Shad; 2010), that pushed states to develop new monitoring programs for shad by 2013, though there likely won't be long enough time series for new surveys.

-Jeff Kipp noted that the data needs such as estimates of removals from ocean-bycatch and river-bycatch remain unreliable to non-existent for making a new stock status determination for either river herring or shad.

-All of the states briefly went through their surveys that were evaluated for the 2009 assessment and answered whether there was any new data for surveys with limited time series as well as any new Juvenile Abundance Index surveys. While a couple of new surveys were added along the coast, most states did not have any substantial changes in abundance counts. Taking this information into account, the group expressed interest in conducting an assessment update in 2018, though it was made clear that the SAS would maintain the option to upgrade to a benchmark stock assessment if the group found it was warranted at the data workshop.

-Kirby Rootes-Murdy and Jeff Kipp asked the group how receptive they would be to having one stock assessment subcommittee (SAS) for both species and running the assessment schedules together, with the understanding that river herring would be completed in 2017 and American Shad in 2018. The reasoning for a combined subcommittee between the two species is that the data sources and fishery-independent surveys primarily collected by the state agencies are the same, as well as many of the technical committee representation on the current ASMFC Shad and River Herring TC membership represent both species for their states, so additional personnel wouldn't be needed. Additionally, ASMFC staff pointed out that going through the same process twice (data workshop and assessment workshops for both species) rather than once, may be costly and time-intensive for TC/SAS membership.

- There was some initial concern expressed over trying to complete both assessments at the same time, even if one were to be completed before the other. Much of the concern dissipated once it was clarified that given the indication of the group so far, assessment updates and not benchmark stock assessments would proceed for both species- this was seen as a lot less work than for one of the species having a benchmark assessment.
- *****The group was in agreement on having one data workshop for the both species, rather than two. For stock assessment subcommittee, while one subcommittee may be sufficient, the group noted that there may be additional staff appointed by their state/agency to work on the American shad Assessment update*****
- It was noted to the group that there will be the need to populate the SAS for river herring, so if interested, notify your supervisor to represent your state.

2) **River Herring.com and utility moving forward**

-Kirby Rootes-Murdy presented the RiverHerring.com website to the TC and highlighted current features of the website. Claire Enterline (former TC Chair; TC member from Maine) had largely

been the catalyst behind the initial website set up and pulling together funding from NOAA, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. With her departure from ME DNR in fall 2015, she had asked whether the ASMFC would be interested in taking on the ownership and upkeep of the website moving forward. Claire's reasoning why the Commission might be well suited for taking on responsibility of the website was the ASMFC TC had the key membership for updating the annual volunteer data on run counts as well as information on the stock assessment process moving forward. Main Questions for the group were: 1) does the group feel this website has utility to the TC and ASMFC broadly moving forward? 2) If so, how should it be maintained moving forward? 3) Should the Commission take it on?

Feedback from the TC focused on whether the website's regional coverage (currently the northeast from ME down to NY) could be extended south to parts of the Mid-Atlantic. There were a few locations in Virginia and South Carolina where run count data could be included moving forward, but otherwise there were not other locations south of NY. Some additional concerns were in the upkeep of the website and how the website may be updated while many states are involved in their spring survey program. Many of the TC members did point out that there could be benefits in continuing the website such as providing a more interactive way for the general public to learn the status of the river herring as well as possibly increasing public engagement in the monitoring process.

-Oliver Cox noted to the group that he is planning on having a replacement for Claire Enterline on the Shad and River Herring TC soon, and that one of their potential responsibilities would be in maintaining the website. *****Once the position has been filled, Oliver will report back to the group on the website maintenance needs moving forward*****

3) Overview of Data Collection Standardization Meeting

-Kirby Rootes-Murdy provided an overview of the River Herring Data Collection Standardization Meeting that the Commission held in November 2015, with financial support provided by NOAA Fisheries. The meeting brought together representatives of 15 state agencies, 1 additional federal agency (US Fish and Wildlife), one federally recognized tribe, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada to present and discuss monitoring programs along the Atlantic coast that encounter river herring species. Current fishery independent and fishery dependent surveys utilized across the Atlantic coast and in inland rivers were reviewed by over 30 participants. The major discussion points included reviewing each current monitoring program (predominantly fishery-independent surveys) as well as current biological sampling associated with each survey. The group developed recommendations to standardize programs and considered funding sources. Strong focus on highlighting recommendations for changes to existing and new surveys that could be done immediately with existing funding. *****The report from the meeting has been finalized and is now available on the Commission website at the following link: http://www.asafc.org/uploads/file/56fc3c6dRH_DataCollectionStandardizationWorkshopSummary_March2016.pdf*****

4) Elect a Chair and Vice Chair

-Prior to the call, Brad Chase (MA) indicated interest in becoming the Shad and River Herring TC Chair. While he hopped off the call early, the group supported this nomination. Oliver Cox also offered that the new TC replacement for ME may be good to take a leadership role with the TC, but that he would need to check in with them first. After the call, Ken Sprankle (USWFS) indicated his interest in becoming the Shad and River Herring TC Vice Chair. *****Without any objection, Brad Chase will become the TC Chair and Ken Sprankle will become the TC Vice Chair starting April 2016.*****