



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

Striped Bass Advisory Panel Meeting Summary

Conference Call
April 21, 2016

Advisory Panel Members: Louis Bassano (Chair, NJ), Arnold Leo (NY), David Sikorski (MD), John Pedrick (PA), John McMurray (NY), William Hall, Jr. (VA), Kelly Place (VA), Pete Whelan (NH), Edwin Cook (RI), Ed O'Brien (MD)

ASMFC Staff: Max Appelman, Deke Tompkins

The Striped Bass Advisory Panel (AP) met via conference call to receive an update from staff on two striped bass management issues that are currently not being discussed at the Management Board-level: 1) the EEZ Transit Zone Clarification and Access Act (H.R. 3070), and 2) the western North Atlantic squid resource. Also, the AP elected a Chairman and Vice-chairman.

"EEZ Transit Zone Clarification and Access Act" (H.R. 3070)

Although the current draft of the bill does not convert the Block Island Sound Transit Zone to state waters or permit striped bass fishing within the zone, nor does it change the current process to permit striped bass fishing in any part of the EEZ in the future, the consensus of the AP is that the passing of H.R. 3070 would set unfavorable precedence for the use of legislative procedures to override the current fishery management and conservation framework. AP members noted that, regardless of the final language, this is not the proper avenue for addressing issues related to prohibited fishing for striped bass in uniquely located federal waters. The AP is in support of fishery management processes that are scientifically sound, are based on technical expertise, and provide ample opportunity for public participation. Additionally, in light of a declining spawning stock, AP members expressed concern regarding insufficient data to support the implementation of a recreational striped bass fishery in currently prohibited waters. It was noted that considerable action was taken prior to the 2015 fishing season in order to reduce fishing mortality back to target levels, and stabilize (or reverse) the downward trend in spawning stock biomass. Management has not yet had the opportunity to respond to the performance of those measures, thus it is the consensus of the AP that the precedence of this bill is not only unwarranted, but is also ill-timed.

Western North Atlantic Squid Resource

Longfin squid (squid) fishing and harvest have increased recently in Nantucket Sound and the surrounding areas. Squid are a well-known food source for striped bass, and the Nantucket Sound uniquely supports large concentrations of both prey and predator during the summer

months. Some AP members (and other fishermen) in the region have reported a decline of migratory striped bass during that time. It is believed that the above average harvest of squid may be a contributing factor to the decreased availability of striped bass during summer/fall fishing seasons. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) is currently drafting a Squid Capacity Amendment which considers options for a squid buffer zone beyond state waters in the area south of Nantucket, as well as addressing the potential for increased effort in the squid fishery. Staff will track the progress of the amendment and provide updates to the AP as necessary. Since squid are of great importance to the striped bass resource, the AP noted that it would appreciate the opportunity to submit comment on the draft amendment, collectively, in support of a squid buffer zone surrounding Nantucket Sound.

Elect Chair and Vice Chair

The AP elected Captain Louis Bassano to the position of AP Chair, and Kelly Place to the position of AP Vice-Chair.

Other Business

The AP would like to meet more frequently and become more proactive regarding conservation and management of Atlantic striped bass. The AP Chair and staff, in consultation with the Board Chair, will discuss the AP's options moving forward.