



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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## Tautog Technical Committee / Stock Assessment Subcommittee Meeting Summary February 7, 2017

*Technical Committee / Stock-Assessment Subcommittee:* Jason McNamee, Jeff Brust, Bob Glenn, Sandy Dumais, Katie May Laumann, Alexei Sharov, Lindy Barry, Craig Weedon, Scott Newlin

*University of Connecticut:* Jacob Kasper

*Staff:* Ashton Harp, Katie Drew

At the Winter Meeting, state-specific harvest reduction analyses were presented to the Tautog Board. The Board voiced interest in an alternative harvest reduction analysis, whereby states within a region would have consistent management measures. The Technical Committee (TC) was subsequently tasked with evaluating consistent management options within the regions of Long Island Sound (LIS), New Jersey-New York Bight (NJ-NYB), Delaware-Maryland-Virginia (DelMarVa). The TC met via conference call to review the regional tasks assigned by the Tautog Board. The next progress call is scheduled for March 16<sup>th</sup>.

The TC tasks by region include:

- **DelMarVa:** TC to evaluate consistent possession limits and spawning periods with a 16" minimum size limit
- **NJ-NYB:** TC to evaluate consistent possession limits and spawning periods with a 15" and 16" minimum size limit and a 'pure' slot limit for the recreational and commercial fishery
- **LIS:** TC to evaluate consistent possession limits and spawning periods with a 15" and 16" minimum size limit and a 'pure' slot limit for the recreational and commercial fishery
- **All 3 regions:** Research peak spawning time periods in LIS, NJ-NYB and DelMarVa

### In-Person TC Meeting

The TC would like to meet in-person to review the regional analyses. The meeting will be on March 29-30<sup>th</sup> in Arlington, Virginia.

1. Meet on March 29 and 30<sup>th</sup> at ASMFC (Arlington, VA)
  - a. Finalize the TC reports on April 14<sup>th</sup> for Briefing Materials

Draft Amendment 1 will be presented at the May Board meeting. Aspects of the regional analyses will be included in Draft Amendment 1, therefore there is a preference for an earlier meeting date.

### **DelMarVa**

- Scott, Alexei and Katie May will correspond via phone or email to ground truth proposed options.
- On the first call the group will discuss recreational options. The priority is a consistent minimum size (16") and consistent spawning closures across the region. The group will evaluate options, respective to the priority management measures, which could include:
  - Option 1: 16" minimum size, shorter closed season and lower possession limits
  - Option 2: 16 " minimum size, increased closed seasons and higher possession limits
    - *Questions to consider when developing the parameters of the options:*  
Are there studies to indicate peak spawning timeframes? Where do the closed seasons currently overlap across states? Are there certain timeframes that states have to be open or closed? What is the lowest/highest possession limit to consider?

### **New Jersey-New York Bight and Long Island Sound**

- The Board tasks are the same for each region, therefore the two regions will continue to correspond while completing the separate analyses. Where possible, the analysts will try to complement management options across the two regions. For example, consistent minimum size and possession limits and to some degree consistent seasons, although the LIS would likely have a longer closed season (than NJ-NYB) due to the need for a larger reduction.
- Jacob has expressed interest in completing both LIS tasks. He has started the slot limit analysis for LIS and is willing to evaluate consistent management measures across the region. The TC discussed the applicability of a slot limit to all regions. Jacob noted that the R code he is developing could be retrofitted for use in other regions. The code is not yet complete but the input into the code is a length distribution of catch compiled from fisheries dependent surveys (e.g., MRIP harvest, Type 9, as well as CT VAS and NY Headboat surveys) as well as harvest/release information from MRIP.

### **Massachusetts-Rhode Island**

The MARI analysts intend to provide additional management options for consideration. These will be provided to the TC prior to the in-person meeting. This will include slot limit options if time allows.

## **Spawning Analysis**

MARI has implemented spawning closures, these were guided by ichthyoplankton studies conducted in Narragansett Bay. Researchers pinpointed when eggs were showing up in high abundance to set the bounds of the spawning closures.

DelMarVa, NJ-NYB and LIS will evaluate the appropriate time period for spawning closures using available data or through a meta-analysis.

## **Assumptions when liberalizing management measures**

Similar to the process to restrict harvest, there should be some common assumptions to apply when liberalizing measures. Liberalizations are more difficult to calculate because the analyst is often working with a lack of data. However, some techniques that may be applied include:

1. Seasons: to open a closed season, one may look back to find the last time the season was open and apply those harvest rates to the newly opened season. The TC will have to determine how far back is appropriate to use for contemporary fishing rates. Additionally, if a portion of a wave is open, the rate for the open portion of the wave may be applied to the closed portion of the wave.
2. Bag limit: increasing bag limits can be based on data that includes discards, bag limit catch rates from previous periods when the bag limit may have been higher may be used (as stated for seasons, how far back one can go will have to be discussed), or calculations can be made by using data from alternative sources such as volunteer angler surveys. If a good source of data does not exist, a Bayesian approach will be reviewed by the technical committee for potential use.
3. Size limit: similar approaches as those described above can be used such as MRIP information including discard information, volunteer angler information, and in this case, fishery independent information can be used to supplement if it exists and is needed (i.e. size distribution from a trawl survey dataset).

## **Standardized Methodology**

The TC had previously discussed the value of a standardized approach to calculate recreational reductions. The new task of consistent management measures across a region will make it more difficult to standardize methodology in all cases. Jay will test his R code versus Jeff's R code and report on the comparison.

After the call, Katie shared the R functions for a simulation model Gary Nelson (MA DMF) created to examine the impact of different size and bag limits on removals/harvest levels. It is a two sex length platoon-based model. It is currently parameterized for striped bass, but it could be parameterized for any species.