



# ***Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission***

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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*Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

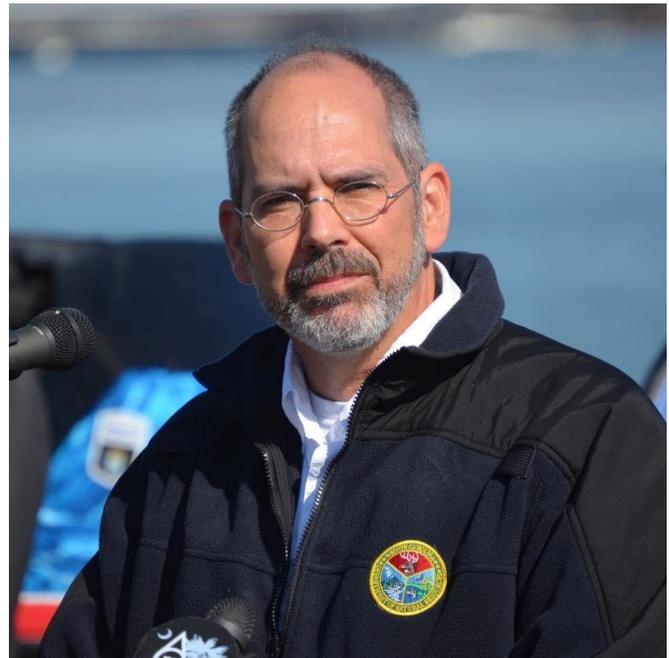
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### **Robert H. Boyles, Jr. Named 2023 Captain David H. Hart Award Recipient**

Beaufort, NC – At its 81<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting in Beaufort, North Carolina, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission presented Robert H. Boyles, Jr., Director of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, the Captain David H. Hart Award for 2023 for his longstanding contributions to and exceptional leadership towards the sustainable management of marine resources along the Eastern seaboard. The Commission instituted the Hart Award in 1991 to recognize individuals who have made outstanding efforts to improve Atlantic coast marine fisheries. The Hart Award is named for one of the Commission’s longest serving members, who dedicated himself to the advancement and protection of marine fishery resources, Captain David H. Hart, from the State of New Jersey.



For nearly three decades, Mr. Boyles has dedicated his career to the conservation and management of marine resources within his home state of South Carolina, within the South Atlantic region through his longstanding participation on the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and along the entire Atlantic coast as Commissioner and past Chair and Vice-chair of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). Robert was an ASMFC Commissioner from 2004 – 2020. Over that time, he was a thoughtful contributor to our process; chairing management boards for Atlantic menhaden, horseshoe crab, and South Atlantic species, as well as the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council.

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The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and diadromous species.

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Over the five years that he served as Commission Chair and Vice-chair, he exemplified leadership through his innate ability to understand and facilitate the cooperative nature of the Commission's Compact. He quickly became and will always be considered the senior statesman of the Commission, with a knack for poignantly quoting one of the nation's founding members to refocus commissioners on addressing the fundamental question at hand. Mr. Boyles was an advocate for transparent decision making; a great supporter of the Commission, respecting the opinions of both senior veterans and new commissioners alike; and a promoter of unity among states, especially during difficult and contentious deliberations.

Mr. Boyles' notable accomplishments include greater protection of shad and river herring, with the closure of state waters in the absence of approved sustainability management plans. He also advanced the Commission's first multispecies approaches to management through the development of the horseshoe crab Adaptive Resource Management Framework and the inclusion of data on predator demands in the Atlantic menhaden stock assessment, setting us on the course for the current management of Atlantic menhaden through the use of ecological reference points.

Although his appointment as Director of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources precluded his continued service to the Commission, Mr. Boyles continues to advocate for the protection of South Carolina's Marine Resources through his directorship of the Department as well as serving on multiple national boards, including Chair of the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Vice-Chair of the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium, and Chair of the National Fish Habitat Board.

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