

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
Striped Bass Technical Committee
Conference Call Summary
February 24, 2011

TC Members: Rob O'Reilly (VA), Kevin Sullivan (NH), Vic Crecco (CT), Alexei Sharov (MD), Chad Thomas (NC), Charlton Godwin (NC), John Clark (DE), Mike Kaufmann (PA), Heather Corbett (NJ), Daniel Ryan, Gary Nelson (MA), Gary Shepherd (NMFS)

Staff Present: Kate Taylor and Genny Nesslage

Connecticut Conservation Equivalency Proposal

The CT request was for the transfer of the annual commercial quota of 23,750 pounds to a bonus recreational fishery. The bonus recreational fishery would allow the harvest of 4,025 striped bass (sizes 22 -27.9 inches) in the CT river (based on an average weight of 5.9 pounds for fish between 22" and 28"). It is estimated that the striped bass population, size 22-28", is approximately 165,000 fish, so the exploitation rate will be 2.4%. Monitoring will be conducted through a tag system. Any striped bass size 22 - 27.9" must be accompanied by a tag. Tags will be mailed back to Marine Fisheries with information on the size of the fish caught as well as the date. The tags will be distributed to Riverfront Riverkeepers as part of a program to promote fishing activities to disadvantaged kids. While the program has been mainly developed as an outreach initiative, it may also provide marginal predator control to help rebuild blueback herring stocks. This program will not replace the current 2 fish / 28" recreational fishery regulations. It is not expected that the entire quota will be harvested. The TC recommended the Striped Bass Board approve the proposal.

Maryland Poaching Events

Alexei discussed the recent striped bass poaching events in MD. Over the last month, MD natural resources police officers recovered 12.5 tons of striped bass in eight separate events. The fishery was shut down on February 4th over concerns the state would exceed its monthly quota. The fishery was reopened for today and Monday after it was estimated that 200,000 pounds of the quota still remained.

North Carolina Discarding Events

Charlton discussed the two striped bass discarding events that occurred off the coast of North Carolina. The first occurred on January 20th when one trawler, who normally doesn't participate in the fishery, caught an estimated 3-4,000 striped bass. The fish could not be pulled on board so the net was dumped. It is believed that the majority of the discarded fish were picked up by recreational and commercial fishers in the area who had not yet met their daily quota. The fishery closed that day, as had been previously scheduled. The second incident occurred on Feb 3rd when the fishery was reopened. DMF received calls of discarded fish and sent a marine aircraft to fly over the area for about 2 hours. A estimated 250 fish were counted floating on the water. Of ~75 fish that washed up at Pea Island NWR, 24 were undersized. The fishery was reopened yesterday through today. In order to prevent similar incidents, DMF raised the daily quota from 50 fish to 2,000 pounds, allowed transfer of fish to other permit holders and limited tow time to 30 minutes.