

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

1444 Eye Street, N.W., Sixth Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 289-6400
(202) 289-6051 (fax)
www.asmfc.org

George D. Lapointe (ME), Chair
Robert H. Boyles, Jr. (SC), Vice-Chair

John V. O'Shea
Executive Director

Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species, or successful restoration well in progress, by the year 2015

ASMFC American Shad & River Herring Advisory Panel Meeting January 9, 2009 Linthicum Heights, Maryland

Attendance

AP Members

Richard Anderson
Michael Blanchard
Alison Bowden, TNC
Ray Brown
Michael Burton
Joe Fletcher

Michelle Hollowell
Pam Gromen
Patti Jackson
George Loring
Dick St. Pierre
Deb Wilson
Byron Young

Staff

Kate Taylor, ASMFC

Public

Brooks Mountcastle, Marine Fish Conservation Network
Lara Slifka, Cape Cod Commercial Hook Fishermen's Association
Ken Lewis, Maryland Coastal Conservation Association

Advisory Panel Comments on Draft Amendment 2 (River Herring)

General Comments

- The AP is very concerned about the high incident of bycatch of river herring and commends the Management Board for addressing this issue in Amendment 2. The AP believes that the occurrence of bycatch in at-sea fisheries is severely impacting restoration efforts by individual states.
- River Herring play a significant role within the ecosystem as a forage species, and are an important cultural, social and economic part of many communities.

Commercial Fishery Management Measures

- The Management Board should not adopt the status quo.
- *Regulate Bycatch:* The AP believes the problem of bycatch is significantly impacting coastwide river herring populations and endorses all measures of bycatch reduction. The ASMFC should work with New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils to ensure bycatch of river herring in at-sea fisheries is reduced/minimized.
- *Close Fisheries, with Exceptions:* The AP endorses, with some modification option 4 – Close Fisheries with exception for those systems that are sustainable.

1. The AP believes that the immediate closure requirement contained in this option makes this, in essence, very similar to option 5 – Moratorium.
2. In lieu of immediate closures, states should be given a specified amount of time to create fishery management plans to document sustainability and develop monitoring plans. During this time period states would be required to reduce effort from current levels.
3. The AP prefers the methods described in options 2A or 2B, but regardless states should be required to implement measures that can show a quantifiable reduction of effort.
4. The Management Board should develop a standard definition of sustainability for river herring stocks.
5. The AP defers to the TC to develop an acceptable timeline for creation of plans. If states do not meet this timeline, then in-river commercial fisheries would be shut down.

Recreational Fishery Management Measures

- The AP endorses options 3B and 3D, for systems that have a substantial recreational fishery.

Monitoring Program Requirements

The AP meeting adjourned before the group had an opportunity to discuss this section of the draft amendment. A motion was made via email to support all the new monitoring specifications as outlined in Section 3 of the document. Four AP members supported the motion and stressed the importance of increased observer coverage and portside monitoring for regulating bycatch. Two AP members opposed the motion, stating that a separate ASMFC monitoring program for river herring was not necessary since the New England Fishery Management Council is already doing so as part of Amendment 4 to the Atlantic herring FMP.

Advisory Panel Chair and Vice-Chair Nominations

The Advisory Panel and the Commission greatly thank Patti Jackson for her service as chair of the Shad and River Herring Advisory Panel. Byron Young was nominated and unanimously voted as the new AP Chair. Dick St. Pierre was nominated and unanimously voted as the new AP Vice-Chair.