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FISHERIES *focus*

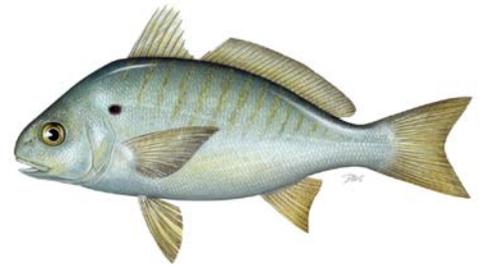
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Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015

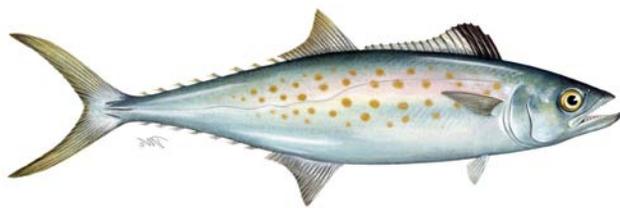
Draft Omnibus Amendment Seeks to Update Fishery Management Programs for South Atlantic Species

In March, the Commission's South Atlantic State-Federal Fisheries Management Board voted to take the next step in updating the fishery management plans (FMPs) for three important South Atlantic species -- spot, spotted seatrout, and Spanish mackerel. With a combined coastwide commercial catch of 12.6 million pounds and a recreational harvest of 14.3 million fish, the three species represent a large draw for all fishermen. The three FMPs had been adopted prior to passage of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act and adoption of the Interstate Fisheries Management Program Charter in 1993 and 1995, respectively. The Board has been working since August 2009 to develop this amendment and update these plans in order to provide for more efficient and effective management. Such updates include commercial and recreational management measures or recommendations, adaptive management, *de minimis* thresholds and exemptions, and monitoring recommendations or requirements. After receiving initial public comments and Board direction, the Draft Amendment is now available for public comment and state hearings.



Spanish mackerel is jointly managed by both the Commission and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Due to data limitations, the most recent stock assessment was not successful in establishing specific values for reference points. The original interstate FMP included a process to review and maintain consistency with federal management, which is essential to maintaining good conservation measures. Over the years, however, both federal and state regulations have changed, while the interstate FMP

has remained unchanged. To address this consistency issue, the Draft Omnibus Amendment currently includes both adaptive management measures as well as a process for Board review and action in response to



changes in the federal regulations, which will allow for greater uniformity across the jurisdictions. Currently, the federal FMP has a proposed Amendment 18, which is scheduled for a final vote by the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council at its June meeting. The proposed Amendment 18 changes are included in the current Draft Omnibus Amendment for public comment.

The original Spot and the Spotted Seatrout FMPs included no requirements for either management or monitoring. The current Draft Omnibus Amendment includes a management trigger for spot, which will help the Board in monitoring the status of the stock until a full coastwide stock assessment can be completed. High levels of spot bycatch present a challenge for managers, in terms of both yearly management and

Inside This Issue

Species Profile: Tautog Page 4

NOAA Fisheries Responds to Recommendations of New England Fishery Management Review Page 6

Northern Shrimp Amendment 2 PID Released for Public Comment Page 7

Science Highlight: Tagging Programs Page 8

24th Cooperative Winter Tagging Effort Completed Page 8

NEFSC Offers Rewards for Tagged Spiny Dogfish Page 9

ACCSP: Automated Electronic Confidential Requests Page 10

ASMFC Employee of the Quarter Named Page 11

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week Schedule Page 12

continued on page 7

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. The fifteen member states of the Commission are: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

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Upcoming Meetings

5/12 (10 AM):

ASMFC Atlantic Herring Section Days Out Meeting, Urban Forestry Center, 45 Elwyn Road, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

5/17 - 18:

Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Program Steering Committee, Holiday Inn & Suites, 625 First Street, Alexandria, Virginia.

5/19 & 20:

ASMFC Habitat Committee, Holiday Inn & Suites, 625 First Street, Alexandria, Virginia.

5/23 - 26:

ASMFC American Eel Assessment Workshop, Courtyard by Marriott-Raleigh Midtown, 1041 Wake Towne Drive, Raleigh, North Carolina; 919/821-3400.

6/13 - 17:

SAFMC, Key West Marriott Beachside Hotel, 3841 N. Roosevelt Boulevard, Key West, Florida.

6/14 - 16:

MAFMC, Danfords Hotel & Marina, 25 East Broadway, Port Jefferson, New York.

6/20 - 24:

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, The Maryland Inn, 58 State Circle, Annapolis, Maryland; 410/263-2641 (see page 12 for meeting schedule).

6/21 - 23:

NEFMC, Holiday Inn by the Sea, Portland, Maine.

6/27 & 28:

Workshop on Reconciling Spatial Scales and Stock Structures for Fisheries Science and Management, Sheraton Harborside Hotel, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

8/1 - 4:

ASMFC Summer Meeting, Crowne Plaza Old Town Alexandria, 901 N. Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia; 703/683-6000.

8/16 - 18:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Suites, 422 Delaware Avenue, Wilmington, Delaware; 302/654-8300.

9/4 - 8:

American Fisheries Society 141st Annual Meeting - "New Frontiers in Fisheries Management and Ecology: Leading the Way in a Changing World," Seattle, Washington.

Working Together to Reduce Dead Discards

An important and somewhat controversial issue in fisheries management, particularly between fishermen and scientists, is the estimation of discard mortality. It's important because scientists need to include dead discards as removals from the stock when calculating abundance. It's controversial because no one knows for sure what happens to fish that swim off after being released. Most anglers would like to believe all releases survive. In the case of properly handled fish taken and returned in shallow water, probably many of them do. But when the fish come from deeper waters, survival rates are less certain, especially when the change in pressure causes visible damage to air bladders and unseen damage to internal organs.

That is why for three days in March, a nationwide group of recreational anglers, charter operators, sport fishing industry representatives, fisheries managers, and environmental groups met with leading scientific experts in the field of release mortality in marine recreational fisheries. The FishSmart Barotrauma Workshop was convened to evaluate the current state of knowledge related to improving the survival of angler caught-and-released fish and explore ways that release and fisheries management techniques could be improved.

A major conclusion of the workshop was that recompression is more effective for many West Coast species than traditional "venting" (releasing gases from a fish's body cavity by inserting a small hollow needle into the body). Some recompression gear (e.g., release baskets) provides protection from predators and reduces the potential for physical injury to fish. However, when recompression is not feasible or available, venting may be the better alternative.

In the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic, additional research is needed to determine if rapid recompression is better than venting. Currently, federal law requires venting bloated reef fish before releasing them in the Gulf of Mexico. The use of recompression devices in the Gulf requires research into whether their use promotes interactions with marine mammals, as these may conflict with provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Some rapid release devices such as release baskets may be appropriate in cases where marine mammals are prevalent.

During the workshop, participants developed guidelines for the release of saltwater fish (focusing on those caught at deep depths) and recommendations for fisheries management. They also identified critical research gaps that are impeding improvement in the management of high release mortality fisheries. One recommendation was to explore the use of exempted fishing permit studies where anglers

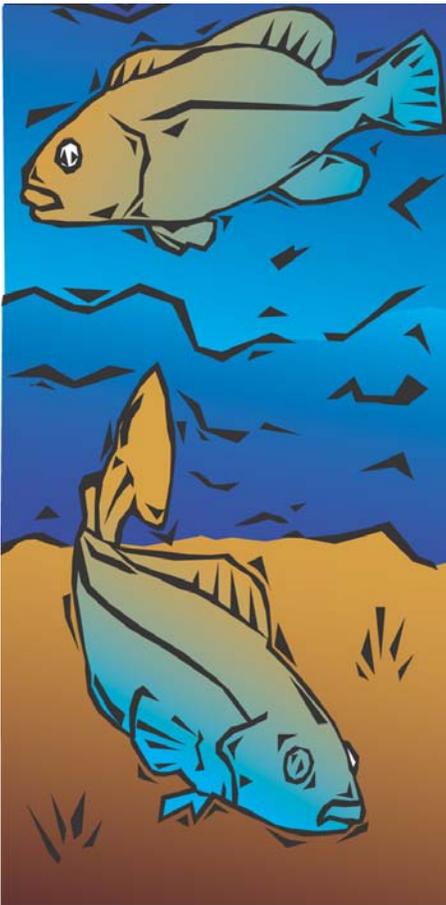
that are trained and certified in maximizing the survival of released fish using recompression could potentially provide much needed data while maximizing the survival of released fish. Some of the general guidelines from the workshop are listed below:

- **Plan Ahead.** Prepare the equipment necessary to release fish before starting to fish. Keep release tools (dehookers, venting tools, recompression tools) nearby and accessible.
- **Avoid encountering fish you are required to release.** If catching fish you cannot or do not want to keep, move to a different area or use a different bait to avoid unwanted catch.
- **Use gear suited for the size of the fish you are trying to catch.** Consider using "weak hooks" that allow you to target fish of a specific size but break if you catch fish too big. Use circle hooks where recommended and be aware that circle hook fishing techniques are different from normal "J" style hook techniques.
- **Land fish as quickly as possible.** Avoid playing fish to exhaustion; use line strength to minimize playing time.
- **Do not keep fish out of the water longer than necessary.** When releasing fish, leave them in the water rather than bringing them on board. Use knotless rubberized landing nets, rubberized gloves, or wet towels to avoid removing the slime layer. Support the body when lifting large fish.

The workshop was part of the larger FishSmart effort, a program lead by the sport fishing community to work with anglers and industry to improve the survival of caught-and-released fish. The initial phases of FishSmart are being funded by NOAA Fisheries through a grant to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Complete findings of the workshop are in the process of being prepared and will be available in April at www.fishsmart.org/news.htm.

FishSmart. A catchy name, with a great goal of reducing dead discards. Hopefully, that is something we can all agree with.

Note: In response to last month's column about the North Carolina striped bass discarding events, a reader noted that North Carolina fishermen have left nearly 500,000 pounds of their striped bass commercial quota unharvested since 2008 due to lack of availability of fish in state waters.



Tautog
Tautoga onitis

Common Names: blackfish, tog, white chinner, black porgy

Interesting Facts:

- * Tautog have several specialized adaptations for living around hard structures, including a blunt nose, thick lips, and powerful jaws.
- * They have conical (pointy) teeth in front, crushing teeth in back, and a set of pharyngeal teeth in their throat, which allow them to pick-up, crush, and sort hard prey such as mollusks and crustaceans.
- * Their rubbery skin has a heavy slime covering that protects them while swimming around rocks.

Maximum Age/Size: 35 years/3.1'

Age/Length at Maturity: 3-4 years/7 - 12"

Age/Length at Recruitment: 6 years/14"

Stock Status: Overfished and experiencing overfishing

Species Profile: Tautog

Significant Reductions Needed to Rebuild Struggling Fish Stock

Introduction

Tautog is an important recreational species caught throughout the Mid-Atlantic from Massachusetts through North Carolina. While still significantly less than the recreational fishery, the commercial fishery has increased over the last decade to supply Asian markets with live fish. A slow growth rate and high site fidelity (aggregation around structure and return to spawning grounds) make tautog particularly susceptible to overfishing. The 2011 stock assessment update found that the stock is overfished with overfishing occurring. Spawning stock biomass (SSB) has remained at low levels for over a decade and management measures have proven insufficient to rebuild the stock. The Board approved Addendum VI in March 2011 to lower the fishing mortality rate target (F_{TARGET}) to 0.15 and initiate rebuilding.

Life History

A member of the wrasse (Labridae) family, tautog is a stout fish with an arched head and broad tail. Juveniles are greenish in color and become darker with age. Fishermen have given tautog the nickname “blackfish” due to its dark mottled sides that are either dull black, brown, blackish green, or blackish blue. Anglers also call tautog “white chin” because this coloring pattern is commonly found on large males.

Tautog are slow growing and can live 35 to 40 years. Males and females are sexually mature at three to four years of age, but studies have shown that larger females produce significantly more (and potentially higher quality) eggs than smaller females.

Tautog are distributed along the Northeast Atlantic coast, from Nova Scotia to Georgia, with the greatest abundances occurring in the U.S. between Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and Chesapeake Bay. North of Cape Cod, tautog generally remain close to shore in waters less than 60 feet. South of Cape Cod, they inhabit waters 40 miles offshore at depths up to 120 feet. During spring, as water temperatures approach 48° F, tautog migrate inshore to spawn in estuaries and nearshore marine waters. They may remain inshore throughout the summer, then move to deeper (80- 150 feet) offshore wintering areas as fall approaches and water temperatures drop below 52° F. Toward the southern end of their range, some adults may remain offshore throughout the year.

Tautog are daytime feeders, and feeding activity peaks at dawn and dusk. Adults feed primarily on oysters, mussels, and invertebrates, while juvenile diets consist of amphipods and copepods. There are no species that preferentially feed on tautog, but fish-eating birds such as cormorants prey on



Photo courtesy of Paul Caruso, MA DMF

juveniles; and smooth dogfish, barn-door skate, red hake, silver hake, sea raven, and goosefish have been reported to feed on both adults and juveniles.

Throughout their life, tautog aggregate around structured habitats. Shallow, vegetated estuaries and inshore areas serve as juvenile nurseries, while larger juveniles cohabitate with adults in deeper offshore waters. North of Long Island, tautog are generally found around rocks and boulders. Toward the southern end of its range, tautog often inhabit wrecks, jetties, natural and artificial reefs, and shellfish beds. They are also found near the mouths of estuaries and other inlets. Adults stay close to their preferred home site and, although they may move away during the day to feed, they return to the same general location at night where they become dormant and may actually sleep. This aggregation around structure makes tautog easy to catch, even when biomass levels are low. The easy catchability and slow growth rate make tautog highly susceptible to overfishing and slow to rebuild.

Commercial and Recreational Fisheries

The tautog fishery is primarily recreational, extending from Massachusetts to Virginia with the majority of landings occurring in state waters between Cape Cod and Chesapeake Bay. The fishery occurs primarily in the spring and fall, although many Mid-Atlantic fishermen pursue tautog year-round, and there is an active fishery off the Virginia coast in the winter.

In the late 1980s to early 1990s, total harvest (commercial landings and recreational harvest) fluctuated between ten and six million pounds (see Figure 1). Harvest declined slightly in the late 1990s after states began implementing the requirements of the fishery management plan (FMP), fluctuating between five and two million pounds. Recreational landings account for roughly 90% of total harvest. The commercial fishery generally occurs between Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Historically, otter trawls have been the predominant commercial fishing gear, although floating fish traps and gillnets have also landed significant numbers of tautog. In recent years, there has also been a slight increase in landings by pots and hook-and-line, largely the result of a growing market for live fish.

Stock Status

The 2011 stock assessment update estimated that SSB has remained at low levels for the last decade, with 2009 SSB estimated at 23.3 million pounds — 39% of the target SSB (59.1 million pounds) (see Figure 2). Current coastwide F is estimated at 0.38,

Figure 1. Tautog Recreational Harvest, Commercial Landings & Total Fishing Mortality (Source: Personal communication from the NMFS, Fisheries Statistics Division, Silver Spring, MD and 2011 Tautog Stock Assessment Update)

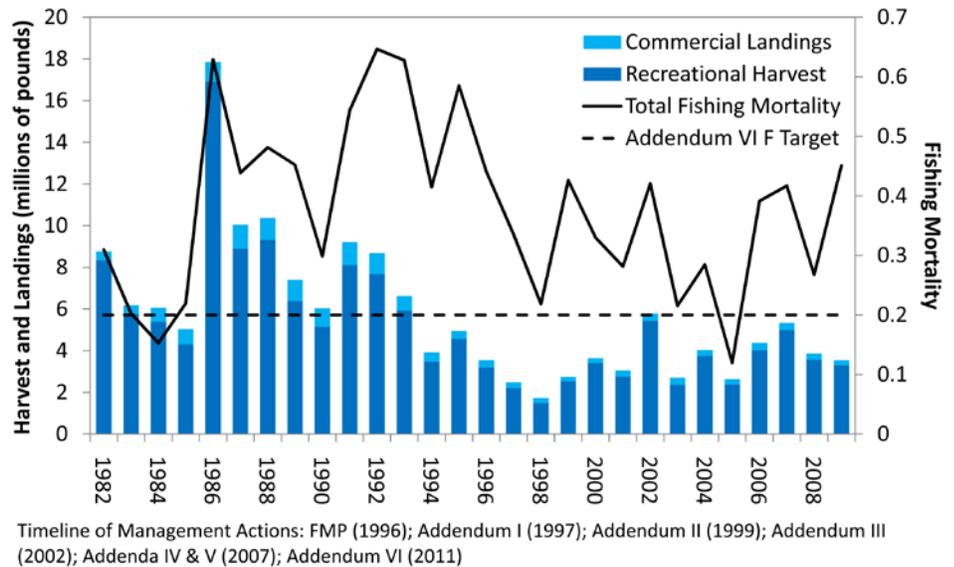
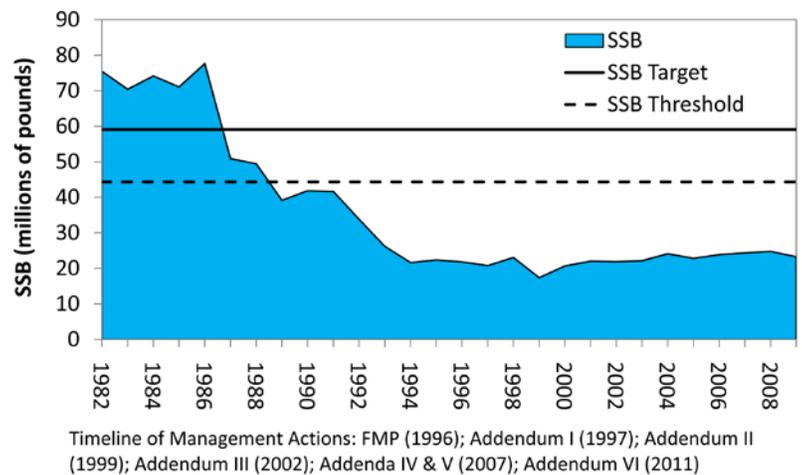


Figure 2. Tautog Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB)
Source: 2011 Tautog Stock Assessment Update



well above Addendum IV's target of $F=0.20$. Overfishing has occurred since 2005.

The Tautog Technical Committee (TC) reviewed the results of the assessment update and recommended implementing an F_{TARGET} of 0.15 or lower to stop overfishing and improve the chances of rebuilding. The TC's review highlighted that tautog's life history makes it particularly susceptible to overfishing and slow to rebuild. It advised that SSB will not increase under the current F (0.38) and will not exceed the SSB threshold (44.3 million pounds) until 2019 under $F = 0.15$ (see Figure 3 on page 6).

Atlantic Coastal Management

In March 1996, the Tautog Management Board approved the FMP to address increases in recreational and commercial fishing pressure on tautog stocks. The FMP's primary objective was to

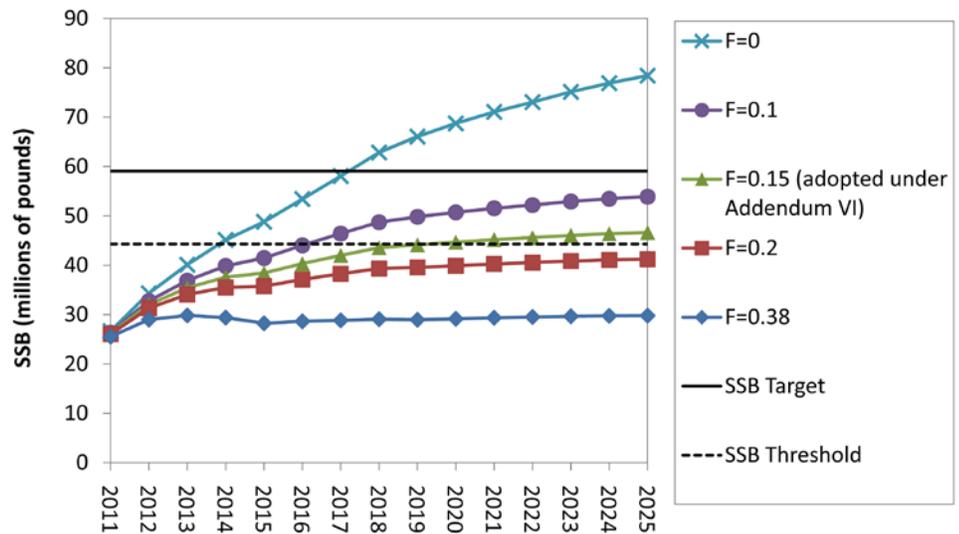
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Tautog Species Profile (continued from page 5)

reduce fishing mortality. It also included a 14" minimum size limit. Under the F rate controlled management plan, states must implement regulations to achieve the F_{TARGET} but can use a combination of measures (seasons, bag limits, quotas, etc.) as best meets their individual needs. The 1996 FMP established an $F_{TARGET} = 0.15$ but set an interim F rate of 0.24 for 1997 and 1998, allowing states to gradually reduce their fisheries. In 1997, the Board approved Addendum I to extend the deadline to achieve $F_{TARGET} = 0.15$ until April 1, 2000. Addendum II (November 1999) further extended implementation until April 1, 2002, and Addendum III (February 2002) changed the F_{TARGET} from 0.15 to 40%SSB (= 0.30).

The Board developed Addenda IV and V in response to the 2005 assessment and 2006 update results showing that stock biomass was flat and had not responded to management measures. The TC reviewed the updated stock assessment and recommended reducing the F_{TARGET} to 0.15 or lower to rebuild the stock. In response to the assessment, TC recommendations, and public input, the

Figure 3. Projections of Growth in Tautog Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) Under Various Fishing Mortality Rates (Source: 2011 Tautog Stock Assessment Update)



Board implemented Addenda IV and V, which reduced the F_{TARGET} to 0.20. All states implemented regulations to achieve the $F = 0.20$ by January 2008.

Five years later, the 2011 assessment update found that the stock continues to be overfished, SSB remains flat, and management measures have been insufficient to rebuild the stock. In response, the Board approved Addendum VI which establishes

a new $F_{TARGET} = 0.15$ and requires a 56% reduction in coastwide exploitation. States are required to implement measures to achieve the F_{TARGET} by January 1, 2012. The Board will continue to closely monitor the status of the resource to determine whether the Addendum VI measures effectively reduce harvest to rebuild the stock. For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, FMP Coordinator, at cvonderweidt@asmfc.org.

NOAA Fisheries Responds to Recommendations from Independent New England Fishery Management Review

On April 26, 2011, at the New England Fishery Management Council meeting in Mystic, Connecticut, NOAA's Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, Eric Schwaab, announced the specific steps the agency will take in response to the initial recommendations from an independent review of the fishery management process in New England. This is the first phase of a regional assessment and management review focused on the relationships among the New England Fishery Management Council (Council), NOAA Fisheries' Northeast Regional Office (NERO), and NOAA Fisheries' Northeast Fisheries Science

Center (NEFSC) and the external factors influencing the process.

The review, conducted by Touchstone Consulting Group and under the leadership of Preston Pate, included interviews with 179 fishermen, other industry participants, local government officials, academic institution partners, members of Council, and NERO and NEFSC staff. The phase one report offers findings and recommendations based on those interviews.

While noting strengths that include dedicated staff at the Council, NERO

and NEFSC, and strong scientific efforts and valuable opportunities upon which to build, the report identified numerous challenges impeding further progress. Those challenges formed the basis for a series of phase one recommendations. Specific recommendations are provided below (in bold), as well as NOAA Fisheries' plans to address the recommendations.

Improve collaboration with partners on science, cooperative research with industry, and reviews of science programs. The report emphasized the critical need that

continued on page 11

ASMFC Northern Shrimp Section Releases Amendment 2 PID for Public Comment and Review

The Commission's Northern Shrimp Section has approved the Public Information Document (PID) for Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Northern Shrimp for public comment and review. As the first step in the development of an amendment, the PID presents a broad overview of the issues facing this species. It provides the public with the opportunity to tell the Commission about changes observed in the fishery; actions that should or should not be taken in terms of management, regulation, enforcement, and research; and any other concerns about the fishery.

The PID and subsequent amendment are being developed to update the Northern Shrimp FMP to provide managers greater flexibility in managing the fishery and maximizing its overall benefits. Since Amendment I, approved in 2004, management measures have been limited to season length and gear restrictions. Potential management options (representing the concerns of managers and stakeholders) outlined in the PID include, but are not limited to, (1) trip limits, (2) clarification of fishing mortality target, (3) limited entry, (4) timely and comprehensive reporting system,

(5) gear modifications to protect small shrimp and reduce bycatch, and (6) implementation of a harvest quota.

Following the initial phase of information gathering and public comment, the Commission will evaluate potential management alternatives and develop a Draft Amendment 2 for public review. Following the second public comment period, the Commission will specify management measures to be included in the final amendment. A tentative schedule for completion of Amendment 2 is included in the PID.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the PID, by either attending public hearings or providing written comments. Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts are conducting public meetings on the PID in early May; information on those meetings is available on the Commission website at <http://www.asmfc.org/meetings.htm>.



Photo courtesy of Cinamon Moffet, University of Maine

Copies of the PID can be obtained by contacting the Commission at (703) 842-0740 or via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on May 20, 2011 and should be forwarded to Michael Waine, FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201 (703) 842-0741 (FAX) or at mwaine@asmfc.org (Subject line: Northern Shrimp Amend 2 PID).

Draft Omnibus Amendment (continued from page 1)

overall assessment of the stock health. For spotted seatrout, the Draft Omnibus Amendment includes measures to protect the spawning stock as well as a coastwide minimum size. These measures will be essential as increased coastal development presents management challenges to this very localized species. Coupled with adaptive management measures, the Draft Omnibus Amendment will provide options for both species to efficiently implement management measures should the Board determine that such measures are needed in the future.

The Draft Omnibus Amendment is currently available for public comment on the Commission website under Breaking News (www.asmfc.org). Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input by either attending public hearings or providing written comments. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on July 20, 2011 and should be forwarded to Danielle Brzezinski, FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; (703) 842-0741 (FAX) or at dbrzezinski@asmfc.org (Subject line: Omnibus Amendment).

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resource's Marine Advisory Committee has placed review of the Draft Omnibus Amendment on its Friday, June 3, 2011 meeting agenda. Additional public hearings will be announced as they are scheduled.

Science Highlight: *Tagging Programs Provide Important Life History Information to Support Stock Assessments*

Tagging programs are important tools for scientists and fishery managers. When designed and carried out correctly, they can provide invaluable information about species' migration patterns, life history, population structure, and more. An amazing variety of marine animals have been tagged, from sharks and marlin to shad and horseshoe crabs.

The most commonly used tag is the simple streamer or "spaghetti" tag, like the one on this striped bass (shown upper right). Each tag is printed with a unique number and the contact information of the agency that runs the tagging program. When the fish is caught again and the tag is reported, scientists can match the tag number to the release record to know how

long the fish was at large, how far it had traveled, and even how much it had grown, if the fish's length was reported as well. Reporting tags is one of the easiest ways for anglers to get involved in fisheries research. For people who want to do more, some programs offer training and tagging kits so anglers can tag the fish they catch and release.

Tagging technology has advanced rapidly in recent years, allowing scientists to answer even more questions about fish



A researcher on the Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruise prepares to release a tagged striped bass.

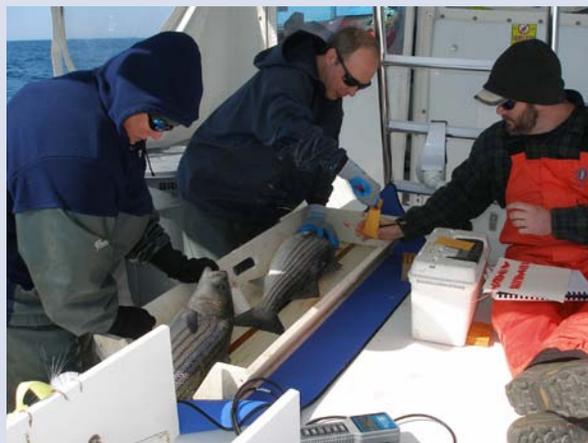
behavior and biology. Acoustic tags are surgically implanted in a fish; each tag sends out a unique radio signal to an array of underwater listening stations

continued on page 10

24th Cooperative Winter Tagging Effort Completed, but Activities Restricted Due to Lack of Funding

While the long running Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruise was not able to conduct a full-scale, trawl-based cruise this year due to lack of funding, it was able to conduct striped bass tagging operations with the help of its state and federal partners. Historically funded by NOAA Fisheries (through use of one of its survey vessels, or provision of charter funds) and supported with in-kind contributions from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS), the Commission, Maryland Department of Natural Resources-Fisheries Service, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries (NC DMF), and numerous additional state fishery agencies and universities, the Tagging Cruise provides important data for the striped bass stock assessment, as well as other ASMFC species. In order to keep the striped bass time series intact, all the partners worked together, with the assistance of additional partners (Paul Caruso, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, who coordinates the Massachusetts component of the cooperative coastwide striped bass program, and Randy Gregory, NC DMF, who coordinated the North Carolina dolphinfish tagging program) to implement a cruise in 2011. Thanks to NC DMF, USFWS was able to charter a sportfishing vessel for one day to conduct tagging operations using hook and line. The necessary permits were issued by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission and the National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Region. A total of 108 striped bass were tagged on the first day alone. An additional trip was scheduled, but was aborted due to adverse weather.

Tagging cruise partners are working together to secure future long-term funding to continue conducting the cruise using a federal research vessel and the traditional trawl gear. Use of this gear has proven not only efficient, but also enables the collection of data on multiple Commission-managed species, including Atlantic sturgeon, spiny dogfish, weakfish, summer flounder, and alosine species, such as shad and river herring. Collection of the fish via hook and line provides data only for striped bass. For more information about the Tagging Cruise, please contact Wilson Laney, USFWS, at 919/515-5019 or wilson_laney@fws.gov.



NEFSC Offers Rewards for Tagged Spiny Dogfish

NOAA Fisheries Northeast Fisheries Science Center has launched a cooperative initiative to tag spiny dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*) in the Gulf of Maine, Southern New England, and Georges Bank. This project is an effort to answer long-standing questions about stock structure, movement patterns, and life history of the species in order to update and improve dogfish stock assessments.

Over a two-year period, a minimum of 33,000 dogfish will be tagged during the winter and summer months from three commercial vessels. Some of fish will be double tagged for a tag retention study, and some will be injected with oxytetracycline (OTC) for an age validation study.

Standard fin tags called rototags will be used during the project and will include a toll-free number for reporting required recapture information -- tag number, fork length, date, and location. Anyone who captures a tagged fish and returns complete information can earn either a \$20 cash reward for one of the 27,000 white tags or a \$100 cash reward for one of the 3,000 "high reward" orange tags.

Recaptures of fish injected with OTC and fish with two tag types -- a rototag and a dart tag -- will require return of the whole fish for a \$100 cash reward (3,000 green tags). Whole fish to be returned should be iced or frozen. Shipping instructions will be provided upon contact.

To report the capture of tagged spiny dogfish, call toll free at 877/826-2612, report online at www.nefsc.noaa.gov/sharktagreport, or email sharkrecap@noaa.gov. For more information, please contact Carolyn Woodhead, Cooperative Research Specialist, at 978/281-9197 or Carolyn.Woodhead@noaa.gov.

REWARD



**Have You Caught
a Tagged Spiny Dogfish?**

\$20 457433	\$100 457434	\$100 457435
KEEP WHOLE FISH*		

**INFORMATION
TO RECORD**

Tag Number	Date
Fork Length	Location

TAKE PHOTO OF TAG NUMBER

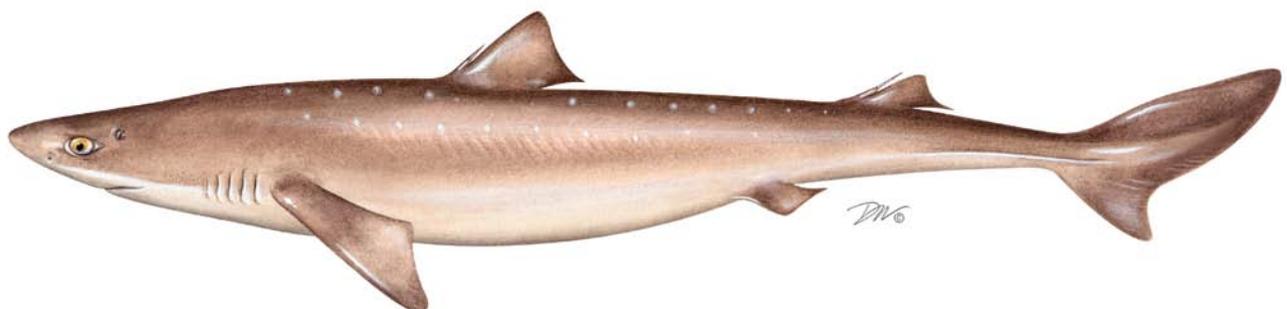
***To claim reward, please store fish on ice or freeze if necessary.
Contact us at the number below for shipping instructions.**

TO REPORT YOUR TAGGED SPINY DOGFISH:

Call Toll Free: 877-826-2612
Email: sharkrecap@noaa.gov
www.nefsc.noaa.gov/sharktagreport



Cooperative Research Spiny Dogfish Tagging Study



Automated Electronic Confidential Requests

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) is pleased to announce that the process for requesting a confidential account for access to the Data Warehouse has been streamlined to an on-line form system.

For years, ACCSP has had customers interested in applying for confidential access download forms, enter in their information, and fax to the state pertinent staff to be granted access to the requested data. State staff would then approve/disapprove the request and notify the customer and ACCSP. If approved, ACCSP would then set up an account for the new customer.

This close monitoring of access to confidential data is necessary because federal and state laws prohibit disclosure of data that could lead to the identification of the contributing individual or individuals. Data at this level are known as confidential data. It is the sole responsibility of

the person extracting confidential data from ACCSP to ensure that confidential data are not disclosed via presentation, publication, or other distribution. Users will be held accountable for any violations by the partner granting access. To learn more about confidential data, please visit <http://www.accsp.org/Confidential.html>.

The Data Warehouse is unique because it harmonizes data received from all program partners into one integrated set of codes for variables such as species, gear, and fishing area, and gives users flexible, intuitive data queries to retrieve and download data. If you would like to request confidential access to the data, please go to <http://warsaw-grouper.accsp.org:7777/pls/accsp/f?p=111:1:7807038799027656::NO::> (it will automatically populate your information if you already have a non-confidential account). To request a non-confidential account, please visit <http://warsaw-grouper.accsp.org:7777/>



[pls/accsp/f?p=104:1:509743346423204](http://www.accsp.org/pls/accsp/f?p=104:1:509743346423204).

About ACCSP

ACCSP is a cooperative state-federal program to design, implement, and conduct marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and to integrate those data into a single data management system that will meet the needs of fishery managers, scientists, and fishermen. For more information, please contact Ann McElhatton, Outreach Coordinator, at info@accsp.org.

Science Highlight: Tagging Programs (continued from page 8)

that records where a fish went, the route it took to get there, and how long it took. For fish that travel long distances, outside of a listening array, scientists can use archival tags that record things like light levels, temperature, and depth as a fish travels. Some archival tags don't even need to be recovered – they can be programmed to pop-off and beam their data to a satellite, which then sends the data to a scientist's computer. These types of tags are expensive and difficult to deploy, which is why the conventional streamer tags remain popular.

Good design and execution are critical to the success of a tagging program; a badly designed program can yield useless, even biased, results and harm the fish it studies. The Commission has just launched its redesigned tagging website and registry to encourage communication and coordination between researchers, tagging

programs, and the general public, and to promote good tagging practices.

At <http://www.fishtag.info>, you can learn about the science of tagging, including the different kinds of tags you might come across while fishing, what to do if you catch a tagged fish, and how to get involved with tagging. There are also searchable databases of Atlantic coast tagging programs and

specific tags to help anglers find a program or identify a tag. The website is a great place to start if you're interested in tagging. For more information, please contact Dr. Katie Drew, Stock Assessment Scientist, at kdrew@asmfc.org

ASMFC Cooperative Tagging Program & Registry

Home About Tagging Caught a Tagged Fish? Get Involved Tag Identification Program Certification

The science of tagging

What's New

This website!

The goal of the ASMFC Interstate Tagging Committee is to improve the availability and use of tagging information to support stock assessments and fisheries management through outreach, education, and coordination of existing programs, and this website is one of the ways we try to reach that goal. We've redesigned the site and updated our database of tagging programs to make them easier to use, more informative, and, of course, prettier.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the website's new features and content, or follow any of the links above to start exploring on your own!

For questions about fish tagging in freshwater, contact your state agency.
For additional information about tagging in marine waters contact Katie Drew at kdrew@asmfc.org

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Kristina A. Ballard Awarded ASMFC Employee of the Quarter

Honored in March for reaching her 20th year at the Commission, Kristina A. Ballard continues to prove her worth as the Commission's Accounting Manager, preparing payroll, taxes, and benefits for 32 employees, while fully accounting for the Commission's grants and annual budget. Kristina's efforts have firmly established her as an important contributor to the Commission's Vision of "healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015." In recognition of her accomplishments, Kristina was named Employee of the Quarter for the second quarter of 2011. This is the third time Kristina has received this special recognition since the award was instituted in 2003. The award is intended to recognize contributions and qualities in the areas of teamwork, initiative, responsibility, quality of work, positive attitude, and results.



Kristina is known best for her cheerful attitude and the speed and efficiency at which she performs her duties of accounting, payroll preparation, and grants management. Her role at the Commission is an essential one -- employees are paid on time, grant proposals are submitted correctly, and grant financial reports are filed on time. The Commission's accounting operations and Kristina's work in particular, are consistently praised by the Commission's auditors. Kristina is dedicated to her profession, seeking out and attending continuing education to strengthen her skill set.

In addition to doing an outstanding job on her assigned responsibilities, Kristina has gone above and beyond over the last several months to help ensure a smooth transition from the Commission's old office space to its new offices. She enthusiastically and energetically worked long hours helping to pack out the old office and set up our new office. She volunteered to take on responsibilities previously handled by the meetings coordinator and quickly stepped in to cover for the Commission's HR Administrator when she had to take extended sick leave.

Kristina's positive attitude, willingness to pitch in and help others, and excellence at which she pursues her primary responsibilities are an inspiration to her coworkers and Commissioners alike. As an Employee of the Quarter, Kristina received a \$500 cash award, a small gift, and a letter of appreciation to be placed in her personnel record. In addition, her name is on the Employee of the Quarter Plaque displayed in the Commission's lobby. Congratulations, Kristina!

NOAA Fisheries Responds to New England Fishery Management Review (continued from page 6)

the science conducted by NEFSC and its partner research institutions is done in a more collaborative manner, maximizing involvement of fishermen in the findings. NOAA will immediately initiate an expedited mid-term review of the 2009 strategic plan for cooperative research in a way that involves all regional cooperating agencies and academic institutions. The results will be incorporated into FY12 research funding prioritization decisions.

Improve communications efforts in very specific and immediate ways. In the Northeast, NOAA will consolidate its

communications staff under one program and coordinate them under one communications plan. NOAA will also build on its efforts to communicate directly with industry through programs like the pilot Fisheries Information Centers, biweekly calls with the sector managers, and its new compliance liaison in New England.

Clarify roles and responsibilities. The review noted that the roles of NERO, NEFSC, and the Council need to be expressed clearly, performed consistently, and coordinated well. NOAA will immediately update the NERO and NEFSC operating

agreement in light of the report recommendations. In addition, through the Northeast Region Coordinating Council (made up of the region's fisheries executives from the New England and Mid-Atlantic Councils, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, NERO's Regional Administrator and NEFSC's Director), NOAA will renew its efforts to clarify NOAA and council functions and specific staff roles through new operating agreements.

Improve data management systems. The review found that NOAA's data manage-

continued on page 12

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NOAA Fisheries Responds to New England Fishery Management Review (continued from page 11)

ment systems are not integrated, appear redundant, and stakeholders are unsure of where to turn for data. NOAA will integrate and consolidate its fishery dependent reporting/collection systems and the underlying data management systems in the region. To improve the timeliness and accuracy of fisherman-reported data and simplify industry reporting requirements, NERO and NEFSC staffs have been working with the industry to transition from paper to electronic logbooks. This conversion will speed processing of data, reduce errors in the data, and relieve the industry of having to obtain, carry, and fill-out paper logbooks. The program will be available initially on a voluntary basis to vessels in multispecies sectors with a target availability date of June 2011.

Mr. Schwaab also opened an informal 30-day public comment period on the report, "A Review of the New England Fishery Management Process." Public comments are being collected online or via fax or mail. The deadline is May 27, 2011. Visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/publicreview/new_england_phase1/index.htm for more information on the New England Fishery Management Review and the public comment process.

The results of a separate independent review focused on the agency's existing science programs were also released at the meeting. Visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/publicreview/new_england_phase1/index.htm#scien for more information on the Science Enterprise report.

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week

**June 20 - 24, 2011
Annapolis, Maryland**

Multispecies Technical Committee

Monday, June 20 Noon - 5 PM
Tuesday, June 21 9 AM - Noon

MSVPA Subcommittee

Tuesday, June 21 1 - 5 PM

Assessment Science Committee

Wednesday, June 22 9 AM - 5 PM

Weakfish Technical Committee

Thursday, June 23 9 AM - 5 PM

Horseshoe Crab Technical Committee

Friday, June 24 9 AM - 3 PM