

**Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
Shad and River Herring Technical Committee
Conference Call Summary
10/14/2010**

Members present:

ASMFC- K. Taylor	ME- Mike Brown	NH- Mike Dionne
MA- Phil Brady	RI- Phil Edwards	NY- Kathy Hattala, Chair
NJ- Russ Allen	PA – Mike Hendricks	DE- Mike Stangl
MD- Bob Sadzinski	PRFC- Ellen Cosby	VA- Eric Hilton
NC- Sara Winslow, Bennet Wynne		SC- Bill Post
GA- Don Harrison	FL- Reid Hyle	CT – Jacque Benway
USFWS Wilson Laney & Larry Miller		

1. Sustainable Fishery Plan (SFP) Review

New Hampshire:

The TC's requests (from the June 2010 meeting summary):

- Include a description of the physical setting of the rivers, type of fishway and a short comparison among rivers. Identify other problems (water quality etc)
- Use repeat spawning marks to determine mortality rates
- Weight effort by day so the trend is not related to the catch
- All data tables need to be actual annual numbers, not three year averages.
- Stocks making up the Great Bay Index (GBI) are declining. This is a poor case for sustainability.
- NH needs to propose some changes to, at minimum, stabilize the populations.

Submitted Revised SFP

- The revised SFP submitted to the TC included a description of river systems to provide background information on river system and setting (location, fishery description etc)
- The remaining TC requests were left unanswered and so questions remain about how NH data could be used to better understand what is happening in the river herring (RH) runs.
- NH is not convinced that inriver harvest is causing the decline but provided no insight, nor analysis of existing data to support this statement.

TC members made the points that:

- The SFP's role is to provide the TC some sort of truth check to get the data out on the table
- Current exploitation rate is much lower than target rate. Stocks are declining. If the 20% is still too high, as the stocks are declining, is NH content with doing nothing?
- Consider using ME's approach – counting escapement first (run counts) then allow harvest once an escapement target is met. This could be done using individual river or the overall GBI index conglomerate
- The primary question to be answered: Does the current proposal fall under the definition of sustainability?
 - Data presented (repeat spawning, run counts, JI) are all declining.

- Using the GBI exploitation target: the danger in having it as the only target is that both harvest and run counts can decline and the exploitation rate would stay the same without triggering any action. The trigger (20%) selection appears to be arbitrary as it is among the highest values of the last 20 years. Why was this level selected? It is higher than the current u of the past five years. One suggestion: set the target low, say 10%, and monitor for a few years to see changes occur in the stocks.
- Use all available data to explore existing relationships. Examples: fish total mortality rates (from repeat spawn and age structure) v. annual exploitation rates; mortality rates v. ACTUAL run counts; young produced and returning adults (lag by 3 or 4 years). Do the above for individual rivers making up the GBI, and then the GBI as a whole.
- Include another indicator or benchmark that will initiate action if stocks continue to decline. Suggestions include:
 - A minimum passage (escapement) number: Sufficient number of adults to create juvenile recruits.
 - A minimum repeat spawn percentage
- Seek assistance from the TC and SAS for the analyses needed as the upcoming SA may suggest additional analyses not identified above.
- Need to highlight what NH thinks may be impacting their stocks
- Include a statement that the recommendation and target(s) will be reviewed during and after the stock assessment is complete.

TC agreed that the current revised NH SFP does not meet the sustainability definition.

Recommendations include:

- Present and use all available data
 - Adult mortality rates (age & repeat spawn data), actual annual run counts, JIs etc.
- Examine relationships between adult mortality & μ , juveniles & returning adults
- Include a secondary fishery independent target
 - Explore use of escapement target (ME example); repeat spawn % etc.
- Provide justification (based on analyses) for selection of all targets
- Seek assistance from stock assessment subcommittee for analyses
- Highlight factors that NH think is impacting stocks
- Targets will be reviewed after the stock assessment is complete

Maine SFP:

TC requests (from the June 2010 meeting summary): :

- A table showing all the runs where fisheries are requested; list all available associated data.
- Data on repeat spawning in a separate table
- List documenting each run: target escapement, harvest, exploration rate (if known) etc
- Describe physical ecosystem: lake, river, tidal marsh, etc. size of pond

- Describe the type of fishery (box trap or a weir); closure days or conservation equivalency (of the 72 hr closure)
- A figure which shows the location / watershed of all the runs.
- Text about the criteria associated with closure, and reopening
- Additional information on the 35 fish per acre calculation
- Comparison of fishery independent data and rivers covered

Submitted, Revised SFP

- ME made all the changes requests by the TC.
- Mike Brown (ME) commented on additional items and /or changes included in the revised SFP:
 - The SFP is essentially an alewife rather than a “river herring” plan. Blueback herring usually show up late- after the fishing season is closed.
 - Included the Z estimates for the runs (08-09) and repeat spawn %. No trend can be stated for the two years of FD data; data collection will continue into the future.
 - At the Aug 2010 Board meeting, river herring captured and kept in bycatch fisheries was discussed. ME will not allow any RH to be landed as bycatch in state waters.
 - Pelagic license is now in place – it will:
 - Provide support for data collections
 - Cover a host of species and closes loophole for some fisheries: menhaden, whiting, mackerel- all RH discards will be kept track of. The coastal fisheries have reporting requirements. For the directed (in-river) fisheries, daily landings will have to be reported to allow for better tracking.

TC reaction: ME did a really good job and provided a comprehensive overview of the fisheries. The TC agreed that the ME SFP met the sustainable fishery requirements. **TC will recommend to the Board that they approve ME’s sustainable fishery plan.**

- M. Brown will produce a public report that can be distributed to the Board removing confidential data.

2. River herring bycatch fisheries in state waters- K. Taylor

The ISFMP Board motion adopted at the August 2010 meeting:

“Move to have the Shad and River Herring Technical Committee notify the states that need to put together sustainable fishery management plans for directed fisheries only.”

After the meeting much discussion occurred among SRH Board members. R. Beal, ISFMP coordinator, sent out an email to all Commissioners to clarify the original motion and the ongoing discussion points on the ISFMP Board decision and concerns voiced over bycatch fisheries.

Discussion will occur at the November Board meeting on the concerns. Currently, the understanding is:

- If a state/jurisdiction is planning to retain river herring as bycatch then they have to submit a SFP.
- Suggestions were made that the TC provide a current status of state SFP development. TC response was that known bycatch fisheries occur in: PRFC, MD, and VA., States closing fisheries are: DE and NJ. GA has no regulations because it has not documented a fishery, however an undocumented recreational fishery occurs on the Savannah River. SC will close their half of the river. FL also has no regulations regarding river herring
- **The TC requests that the Board consider the question:** For states that have no documented river herring fisheries and no regulations regarding fishing for these species (GA & FL), does the state need to implement regulations to assure that no harvest occurs (i.e. be at moratorium) to be in compliance with A2?

SFP Submittal dates – If a state/jurisdiction needs to submit a SFP, it needs to be sent in as soon as possible to ASMFC to initiate TC review.

- Changes to an approved SFP or moratorium should be submitted by July 1 with compliance report

3. River herring lawsuit: K. Taylor

4. Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council(MAFMC) – Amendment 14 informational meeting. K. Taylor

- An informational meeting with a webinar was held on October 6th in Philadelphia. Information will be used in the development of Amendment 14 to the MAFMC Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish plan.
- Am 14 will deal with bycatch. Copies of all presentations are up on the MAFMC website (www.mafmc.org):
 - Tom Miller- development of a shad bycatch cap
 - Matt Cieri (ME) and Jamie Cournane (UNH) river herring bycatch work and hotspot id analysis, plus possible creation of a RH bycatch cap for Atlantic herring fishery
 - Andy Kahnle on biology and status of Alosines.
 - Larry Miller (USFWS) gave an overview of funds spent on restoration of anadromous fish: ~\$250 mil. He highlighted cooperation between USFWS and the states and summarized the investment made into restoration projects. A 5yr summary expenditures of all parties totaled to about \$15 mil USFWS, \$18 mil states and NGOs. Most of the federal money is spent on fish passage and state funds went toward monitoring followed by fish culture. Over the last 25-30 yrs, about \$250 mil has been spent on fish restoration by states and federal agencies – this is a serious endeavor by all agencies to restore fish.
- MAFMC may have another informational meeting next year.

General Comments

- Got a sense of bycatch monitoring: the juice is worth the squeeze – do you really want to find out how many are caught
- Others pointed out the difficulty in getting a good estimate.

- Wilson Laney can provide a more detailed amount for \$ spent on fish restoration in the southeast region if anyone is interested.
 - Mike Brown countered that if folks blamed declines on dams and other things, why should we worry about bycatch.
 - Schedule of A 14: The Council is still in an early development stage; they are watching development of the NE Council's A5 to the Atlantic Herring Management Plan which will deal with bycatch.
 - Still talk of developing a federal Alosine fish management plan. Lead could possibly be the MAFMC. All ideas are still in a discussion phase. An initial idea like this surfaced back in the 1980s at about the time of the ASMFC Shad & River Herring Fisheries Management Plan. Issues include:
 - o How would a federal plan work? How would it mesh with the states FMP? An example is the gulf sturgeon FMP where the states and the Gulf of Mexico FMC developed a joint plan (5 states and 2 Federal agencies) to collectively manage gulf sturgeon. The Gulf got lots of money from the BP oil spill so they are working hard on tracking sturgeon movement. Fish were in the rivers when the spill occurred.
 - o A plan could be done on the east coast for Alosines, or just river herring or Atlantic sturgeon, and/or some sort of joint bycatch plan with the NE council.
5. New England Fisheries Management Council (NEFMC) Amendment 5 Update – K. Taylor
- Plan to begin review of the management options and initiate a draft EIS in January and February.
 - They will try to target Oct 2011 for the draft, then May 2012 for the final version, with a final rule by Oct 2012.
6. Impacts of Atlantic Sturgeon listing - K. Taylor
- The proposed listing for Atlantic sturgeon came out last week. Of the five distinct population segments (DPS) four are proposed for endangered status; exception was threatened status for the Gulf of Maine DPS.
 - ASMFC is developing comments on the proposed listing including impacts on states restoration programs or fisheries impacted by this listing. The NMFS proposed listing will be discussed at the ISFMP policy board meeting.
 - There may be a request for more information from the sturgeon technical committee if a listing is determined. Potentially there may be a joint Sturgeon and SRH technical committee meeting to talk about impacts of the listing.
7. Stock assessment update and tasks: SAS met in August they are requesting the following from the TC to fill out and complete:
- o Data criteria workbooks that include descriptions of all sampling programs. This is part of the new ASMFC stock assessment process where survey data are evaluated as to its usefulness – i.e. is it actually measuring what it is intended to measure - need to ID any problems etc – sufficient sample size, lift efficiency etc. KH will send out examples from both NY and MD (Bob S).
 - o Also want everyone to update 2008 Stock status report text along with the Excel workbook (data tables and figures). They would like to include data up to 2010
 - o Deadline for all requests: Feb 1, 2011

8. Vice chair: we still do not have one!

9. Other business

- Questioned whether there would be any utility (it is not a requirement for A2) to rolling river herring into the shad habitat plans under A3 that are due in 2013. May result in a more comprehensive document can be produced in the available time
- Is there a way to identify coastal migration corridors for river herring
 - Hard to do this in the ocean; a few tagging program in the pasts showed that SC herring show up in the Bay of Fundy
 - Sonic tagging? Current focus is on sturgeon – several arrays are out in ocean waters. Dwayne Fox with T. Savoy help coordinate sonic database. Hudson American shad were picked up on an array at the end of Long Island Sound, so it may be possible; would have to uses small tags.

Meeting adjourned.