



ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

Volume 11, Issue 10
October 2002

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission • 1444 Eye Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission 61st Annual Meeting

November 17 - 21, 2002

**Williamsburg Lodge
310 South England Street
Williamsburg, Virginia
(757)229-1000**

Preliminary Schedule

(Note: The schedule is subject to change up until the time meetings are held.)

Sunday, November 17, 2002

4:00 PM - 6:00 PM Advisory Panel Oversight Committee

- Review December 2001 Workgroup recommendations
- Review staff activities to date
- Review Draft Advisory Panel Oversight Committee Charter
- Discuss next steps

Monday, November 18, 2002

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Tautog Management Board

- PRT Report: Status of State Compliance, FMP Review
- Discuss items for inclusion in Draft Addendum IV (removal of North Carolina from FMP, errata to Addendum III, Board directive to staff)
- Review reports and recommendations of the Technical Committee, Advisory Panel and Law Enforcement Committee regarding state proposals
- Law Enforcement Committee Report on Magnitude of Unreported Landings

11:00 AM - Noon American Eel Management Board

- Review/approve PRT Report and FMP Review
- Discuss Pennsylvania's request for indefinite exemption from annual young-of-the-year sampling
- Reports of the Technical Committee and Stock Assessment Subcommittee

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM Spiny Dogfish & Coastal Shark Management Board

- Technical Committee Report
- Review/approve Final Interstate FMP for Spiny Dogfish

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM Law Enforcement Committee

- Review task assignments from spring
- Report of conservation equivalency workgroup
- Discuss revisions to Guidelines for Resource Managers

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Data Collection Methodology**
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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 anadromous 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.

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Susan Shipman (GA), Chair
John I. Nelson (NH), Vice-Chair
John V. O'Shea, Executive Director
Robert E. Beal, Director, Interstate Fisheries Management Program
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Laura C. Leach, Director of Finance & Administration

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Upcoming Meetings

11/5 - 7:

New England Fishery Management Council, Gloucester High School Field House, Gloucester, Massachusetts.

11/7 (9:30 AM - 5:30 PM):

ASMFC Weakfish Advisory Panel, Holiday Inn BWI, 890 Elkridge Landing Road, Linthicum, MD For more information, please contact Carrie Selberg at cselberg@asmfc.org

11/12 & 13:

Horseshoe Crab/Shorebird Workshop: A Forum For Collaboration, John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; <http://heinz.fws.gov>

11/13 (10:30 AM - 3:00 PM):

ASMFC Northern Shrimp Section, Urban Forestry Center, 45 Elwyn Road, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

11/17 - 21:

ASMFC 61th Annual Meeting, Williamsburg Lodge, 310 South England Street, Williamsburg, Virginia (see agenda on pages 1, 6 & 7).

12/2 - 6:

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Sheraton Grand New Bern, 100 Middle Street, New Bern, North Carolina; (800)325-3535.

12/3 (9:00 AM - 5:00 PM) & 4 (9:00 AM - 3:00 PM):

ASMFC Conservation Equivalency Subcommittee, Florida Marine Research Institute, St. Petersburg, Florida.

12/10 - 12:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Sanderling Resort, Duck, North Carolina.

2003

1/28 - 30:

New England Fishery Management Council, Courtyard by Marriot, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

2/24 - 27:

ASMFC Meeting Week, Doubletree Crystal City, 300 Army Navy Drive, Arlington, VA 22202, 703/416-4100.

2/27 - 3/1:

Maine's Fishermen's Forum, Samoset Resort, Rockport, Maine.

3/4 - 6:

New England Fishery Management Council, Providence Biltmore, Providence, Rhode Island.

This month we start a new and regular section in *Fisheries Focus*, which features a species under Commission management. Our goal is to provide you information on the 22 species we manage, including updates on abundance trends and stock status, information of recreational and commercial fisheries, as well as a review of any significant management issues. This feature should serve as an educational tool, as well as a report card to us all as resource managers and stakeholders. I hope you enjoy it and find it useful.

It strikes me that one of the great challenges in fisheries management is dealing with the sharp controversies that are inherent in this business. It does not matter whether we are talking about conservation strategies, state-by-state harvesting schemes or user group allocations, every step seems to be characterized by well-intentioned folks on both sides of an issue strongly promoting their views. In many cases, particularly with allocation, satisfying one side is by definition to deny the other side. As a result, emotions often run high, as does the volume of the rhetoric.

You have heard, and perhaps have been part of, the discussions. On conservation, we disagree on the status of the stock or the need to take action (especially if it means less fish for me in the short-term). On state harvesting, we disagree with the season dates or state-by-state quotas (particularly if it means my state does not get most of the fish). On sector allocation, we disagree with a commercial harvest or setting aside quota for the for-hire fleet (especially if it means limiting the number of fish I can take home). There seems to be no end to the controversies, claims and frustrations, complete with threats of boycotts, lawsuits or withdrawal from the process.

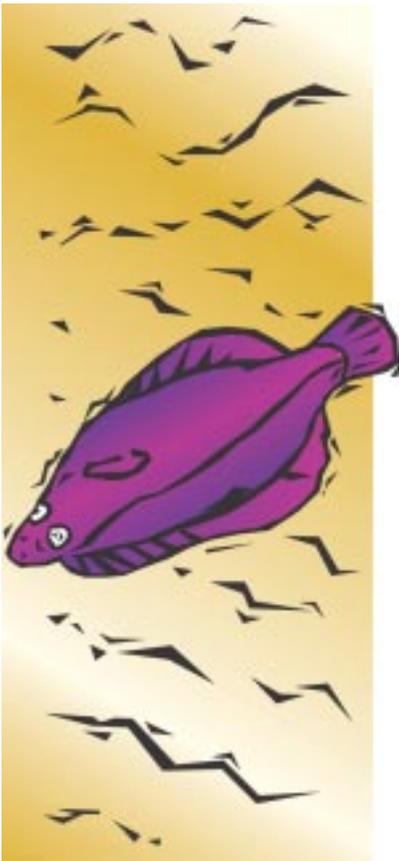
It seems to me the first step in trying to resolve our differences is to identify areas we can agree on. I am encouraged that all sides are making steady progress in placing the long-term health of the resource first. This is an obvious strategy, but the short-term pain of sacrifice occasionally causes some to waiver. I also see widespread, but not unanimous, acceptance of a basic Commission principle that the states have more to gain by operating cooperatively rather than independently. This requires participants to take a higher level view of optimizing outcomes for all versus maximizing gain for one. I like the analogy of two people vying for the last orange in the store. The strongest

person could get it or each person could get a half. But both solutions fall short of a more elegant one suggested by understanding that one person wanted to use the peel in a recipe, while the other wanted the orange to eat. (Borrowed from "Getting to Yes," by Roger Fisher and William Ury.)

This leads to the issue of knowledge. We can blunt the sharpness of our differences by opening ourselves to receive a complete range of information on the issue. This includes knowledge of the life cycle of the species we manage, as well as the latest and most complete scientific information on stock status. What a pity it is to squander our political and emotional energy arguing over a management measure when one side has incomplete information and cannot understand the basic need to take action. Taking the knowledge concept to the next level suggests trying to understand the needs and interests of the other players. For a given fishery, are we using harvest strategies that maximize benefits to both the resource and to the associated user groups?

We on the staff recognize the important role we play in this process. Our job is to help provide this knowledge for all Commission-managed species. We need to help frame the issues to facilitate the decision-making process for our Commissioners. We must be totally objective, presenting all sides of these complex issues in a fair, clear and thorough manner. We also serve you, the public, keeping you informed about the elements of the problems, impacts of the measures and the benefits of the solutions.

As for me, I am committed to the principle of public debate. I see my job as ensuring that we provide the proper information and a forum for both the public and our Commissioners to discuss the issues. At the end of the day, when I measure success, it will not be to ask if you got exactly what you wanted. Instead, I will ask, did you understand the issue, did you have access to all the available information, and were you given the opportunity to express your views? If the answers to all of these questions are yes, then we as a staff have done our part. As for the outcome, credit for that rests with the collective wisdom and judgement of our Commissioners, who, I am convinced, are committed to doing the right thing. I hope that is something we can all agree on.



Summer Flounder
Paralichthys dentatus

Family: Bothidae

Common Names: fluke, flounder

Species Range: inshore & offshore waters from Nova Scotia, Canada to East Coast of Florida

Age at maturity: 50 % mature by age 1 for males and 1.5 for females

Age at recruitment into commercial fishery (14" minimum size): age 1

Species Profile: Summer Flounder

The Future Looks Bright -- Joint Management Efforts Bring Steady Results

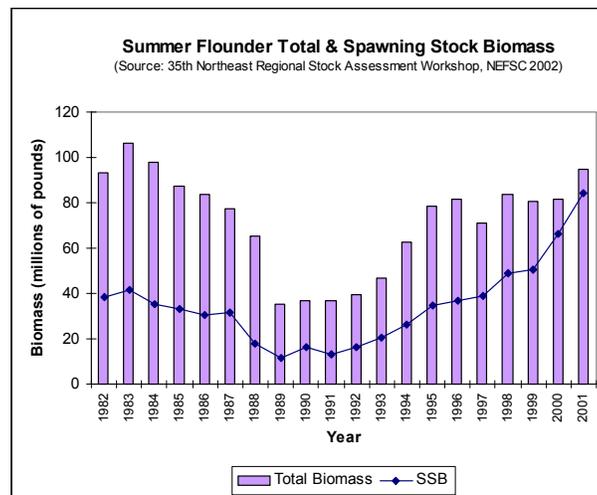
Introduction

Summer flounder, *Paralichthys dentatus*, is one of the most sought after commercial and recreational fish along the Atlantic coast and is among a growing number of species benefiting from successful fisheries management. After reaching record low total biomass levels throughout the early 1990s, current total biomass estimates are once again approaching their mid-1980s record highs (see figure below). Additionally, spawning stock biomass is at the highest level for the entire time series. This rebuilding is a direct result of the long-standing commitment of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, and commercial and recreational fishermen to restore this important species.

This article will provide a brief overview of this important fish – its stock status, commercial and recreational fisheries, and current and future management considerations.

Stock Status

In August 2002, the Northeast Stock Assessment Review Committee found that while the summer flounder stock is recovering, it is still overfished and overfishing is still occurring relative to current definitions. The fishing mortality rate has significantly declined from 1.32 (or an exploitation rate of approximately 68 percent) in 1994 to 0.27 (22 percent) in 2001, not significantly above the current overfishing definition of 0.26 (21 percent). Total stock biomass in 2001 was estimated to be 95 million pounds, only 19 percent below the management plan's current biomass threshold and a substantial increase from 1989 levels. Additionally, abundance at



age for most age classes has increased significantly over the last ten years (see accompanying figure). It is believed that if stocks continue to rebuild at the current rate and fishing mortality remains constant, stocks will no longer be in an overfished condition by 2003.

Commercial & Recreational Fisheries

Summer flounder are a highly prized food fish sought by both recreational and commercial fishermen from Massachusetts to North Carolina. Two major commercial trawl fisheries exist -- a winter offshore and a summer inshore. Summer flounder are also taken by pound and gill nets in the estuarine waters of Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. In 2001, commercial fishermen landed 10.9 million pounds of summer flounder, with an ex-vessel value of approximately \$20 million. The relatively stable commercial landings over the last few years are due to a constant quota from 1996 – 2001.

A substantial summer flounder recreational fishery exists and accounts for nearly 12 percent of all marine recreational fishing trips coastwide. In 2001, recreational anglers landed 12 million pounds of summer flounder according to the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS).

Atlantic Coast Management Considerations

The Commission approved the first Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Summer Flounder in 1982, followed by a similar FMP approved by the Council in 1988. Since then, both agencies have made significant revisions to the plan, increasing the protection of juvenile fish and ensuring the maintenance of an adequate spawning population. This increased protection was achieved through the implementation of larger minimum size limits across all sectors, increased mesh sizes, and decreased recreational possession limits. Cumulatively, these changes have contributed to rebuilding the resource.

This is not to say that challenges in managing this species do not still exist. Recreational and commercial allocation issues persist. For the last few years, the recreational harvest has exceeded its allocation. Additionally, managers and scientists continue their efforts to improve the data and science used to manage this species.

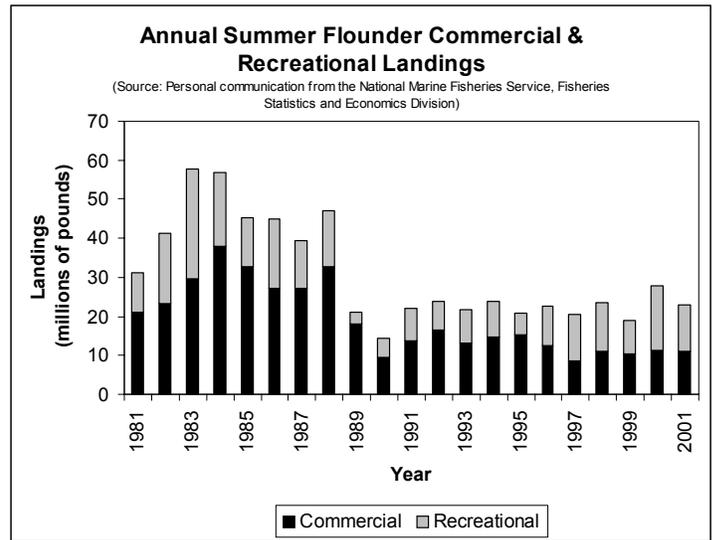
Allocation

Using baseline data from 1980 to 1989, the current plan allocates the summer flounder quota on a 60 percent/40 percent basis to commercial and recreational fisheries, respectively. This period was chosen because these landings data represented the most complete and accurate data available for both commercial and recreational fisheries prior to the implementation of coastwide management measures.

Some within the recreational fishing community have questioned the use of these base years, suggesting that the majority of historic landings (pre-1980) were caught by recreational anglers and that using recreational catch data collected prior to the creation of MRFSS would produce a higher recreational allocation. The Commission's Summer Flounder Technical Committee discussed the possibility of using pre-1980 catch data, but determined that the data was not available for summer flounder as an individual species (i.e., all summer flounder data were included in a general flounder category). The Technical Committee concluded that use of these data for quota allocation was inappropriate. This conclusion was supported by both the Commission and Council.

Recreational Overages

Each year since 1996 the annual recreational harvest limit has been exceeded, with overages ranging from 13 to 114 percent. The impacts of these overages on the fishery are



significant and extend beyond the recreational sector to affect the total allowable landings limits, and thus both the commercial quota and recreational harvest limit.

To address this issue, the Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board has initiated the development of FMP Addendum VIII. Its purpose will be to provide a mechanism by which any overages in the recreational fishery will directly effect the recreational harvest limit for the following year. Although specific regulations have yet to be determined, it is anticipated that Addendum VIII will be in effect in 2003. State public hearings to solicit comment will be held sometime in the late fall or winter 2002, with final approval expected in February 2003.

Biological Reference Points

Over the last several years, the Commission and Council have raised concern regarding the plan's current biological reference points (i.e., fishing mortality targets and thresholds) and whether they are the most appropriate benchmarks to measure the success of the management program. In 2001, the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) conducted analyses to evaluate the appropriateness of the current reference points and concluded that no changes to the reference points were warranted. However, the SSC agreed that this issue should be reevaluated during the next stock assessment (2004) to allow for the inclusion of additional data points from a robust population of summer flounder.

Conclusion

Over the last ten years, rebuilding of the summer flounder resource has resulted from the collective efforts of fishery scientists, managers and fishermen. Both managers and fishermen continue to work towards the improved health and viability of the resource, while allowing for greater opportunities for all fishermen.

ASMFC Annual Meeting Preliminary Agenda (continued from page 1)

Monday, November 18, 2002

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM Law Enforcement Committee (continued)

- Discuss recommendations from the American Lobster Transferability Workshop
- Update and reporting of FMPs
- Reports of the National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and U.S. Coast Guard

1:00 PM - 3:00 PM Management & Science Committee/Habitat Committee Aquaculture Subcommittee

- Review submitted comments on Aquaculture Guidance Document and develop recommendations to the Management & Science Committee

3:30 PM - 7:00 PM Welcome Reception at Jamestown

Tuesday, November 19, 2002

8:00 AM - 10:00 AM Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board

- Review/approve 2002 compliance reports
- Review/approve 2002 FMP Reviews
- Review/approve Addendum VIII to the Summer Flounder FMP
- Discuss Commission/National Marine Fisheries Service scup summer period quota discrepancy

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM Habitat Committee

- Review draft Molluscan Shellfish Habitat paper
- Review SAV Subcommittee Report on SAV State Conservation Plans
- Review SAV brochure and Artificial Reef Materials Guidelines

8:30 AM - 5:00 PM Law Enforcement Committee (continued)

10:00 AM - Noon South Atlantic State-Federal Fisheries Management Board

- Review/approve state implementation plans for Red Drum Amendment 1
- Review/approve draft 2002 FMP Reviews
- SEAMAP update

11:00 AM - Noon Joint Meeting of the Habitat Committee and Management & Science Committee

- Review Aquaculture Guidance Document
- Update on Transatlantic Pipeline Project, multispecies activities, and power plant assessment

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM Atlantic Menhaden Management Board

- PRT Report on status of 2002 fishery and 2002 FMP Review

1:00 PM - 5:00 PM Management & Science Committee

- Review Interstate Tagging Issues paper
- Update on conservation equivalency policies
- Develop peer review priorities
- Discuss invasive species issues
- Review/approve 2003 Research Action Plan
- Review Draft Aging Manual
- NEAMAP and ACCSP updates

2:00 PM - 5:00 PM Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

- Review/approve State Compliance Report
- Review/approve 2002 FMP Review
- Review/approve proposed changes to Massachusetts management program
- Report on stock assessment update
- Review/approve Amendment 6 to the FMP

6:30 PM - 8:30 PM Colonial Dinner

continued on page 7

ASMFC Annual Meeting Preliminary Agenda (continued from page 6)

Wednesday, November 20, 2002

8:00 AM - 11:00 AM American Lobster Management Board

- Plan Review Team Report: Update on status of state compliance and FMP Review
- Review/approve LCMT Subcommittee recommendations regarding revisions to Lobster Operating Procedures
- Discuss tag issuance concerns
- Law Enforcement Committee Report: Alternative marking strategy for Massachusetts noncommercial lobster pots/traps
- Advisory Panel Report
- Technical Committee Report (V-notch model discussion, update on performance review criteria, Area 2 issues and evaluation, response to Plan Development Team recommendation regarding concern in delay of Addendum III implementation)
- Discuss issues for inclusion in Addendum IV
- Addendum III gauge size and marketing issues discussion

8:00 AM - Noon Management & Science Committee (continued)

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM Commissioner Workshop "Draft 2003 Action Plan Review"

1:15 PM - 2:15 PM Captain David H. Hart Award Luncheon

2:30 PM - 6:30 PM Weakfish Management Board

- Technical Committee Report on state compliance and FMP Review
- Advisory Panel Report
- Review public comment for Amendment 4 and select management program for final plan

Thursday, November 21, 2002

8:00 AM - 11:30 AM ISFMP Policy Board

- Habitat Committee Report
- Management and Science Committee Report
- Law Enforcement Committee Report
- Advisory Panel Oversight Committee Report
- Review of ESA Workshop Findings & Recommendations
- Discuss/approve changes to the ISFMP Charter
- Review, prioritize, and approve planned work under 2003 Action Plan
- Review noncompliance findings (if necessary)

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM Executive Committee

- Executive Director's Report
- Report of the Administrative Oversight Committee
- Report of the Legislative Committee
- Future annual meetings
- Litigation update

1:00 PM - 1:30 PM Business Meeting

- Review noncompliance findings (if necessary)
- Approve Fishery Management Plans or Amendments (if necessary)

2:00 PM - 6:00 PM ACCSP Coordinating Council

- ACCSP Director's update
- Review/approve FY03 funding proposals
- Review/approve ACCSP Director and Committee roles and responsibilities
- Review/approve ACCSP Addendum to the MOU
- Demonstration of Rhode Island web-based dealer reporting system
- Demonstration of registration tracking system



The Atlantic Coast Adopts a New For-hire Data Collection Methodology

The partners of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) will implement a new coastwide methodology for collecting catch and effort data from for-hire vessels beginning in the spring of 2003.

This move comes following an ACCSP-funded pilot study of three data collection systems in South Carolina. Because the traditional random-digit dialing telephone survey conducted by the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS) provides inadequate effort data for charter and headboats, the ACCSP tested it against two other methodologies. These were South Carolina's mandatory charter vessel and headboat logbook, and weekly phone surveys of charter and headboat captains. The traditional MRFSS telephone survey for effort data does not cover charter and headboats well because most for-hire clients do not live in the coastal counties covered by the random-digit dialing survey.

Independent reviewers from the American Fisheries Society presented a report to the ACCSP based on data gathered from the pilot study. The ACCSP's Recreational Technical Committee and Operations Committee reviewed the report's findings and recommendations regarding the best course of action for a coastwide data collection methodology. With each methodology, several factors had to be weighed, such as statistical variance, data for rare event species, reporting burden to the industry and cost.

At the May 22, 2002 meeting of the Coordinating Council, the ACCSP adopted the weekly telephone survey of captains as the preferred methodology for collecting effort data from the for-hire sector. Better catch data will also be collected through MRFSS intercepts with increases in sample size and observers for headboats.

"This change will greatly improve the

Atlantic coast's data set for the for-hire sector," says Maury Osborn, ACCSP Director. "Logbooks have provided good data in some areas, but for the future of the Atlantic coast, a comprehensive sampling methodology will give us the best value."

Like South Carolina, several partner jurisdictions require for-hire logbooks, such as the National Marine Fisheries Service. As the new methodology begins in the spring of 2003, partners will continue collecting logbook data for benchmarking purposes, and some may continue in accordance with fishery management plan requirements. As statutory requirements allow, logbooks can be phased-out in favor of the preferred coastwide methodology. NMFS regional offices will coordinate with the MRFSS to reduce or eliminate duplicative reporting.

The ACCSP's partners and staff are doing planning for outreach to the Atlantic coast's for-hire communities over the next year. Staff have been in contact with several local charter associations and the National Association of Charterboat Operators for possible opportunities to communicate the changes in data col-

lection. Sea Grant is also planning workshops for for-hire captains in Mid-Atlantic states, and data collection should be an important component in those talks.

About the ACCSP

The 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. It is composed of representatives from natural resource management agencies coastwide, including the Commission, the three Atlantic fishery management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the DC Fisheries and Wildlife Division, NMFS and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. For more information, please contact Abbey Compton, ACCSP Outreach Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or abbey.compton@accsp.org.



ASMFC Publication on Beach Nourishment Available in November

Beach nourishment activities taking place along the Atlantic coast have the potential to impact many of the species that the ASMFC manages. A recent report of the Commission's Habitat Program seeks to identify these potential impacts. The report, written by Karen Greene, outlines the beach nourishment process, nourishment activities along the coast, potential impacts at both the mine site and target beach, research needs, and gen-

eral recommendations. The report is intended to educate fisheries managers and the general public about these impacts and highlight additional research needs.

The report is scheduled to be available by mid-November. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of the report, please contact Carrie Selberg, Habitat Specialist, at (202)289-6400 or cselberg@asmfc.org.

National Whale Conservation Fund Request for Proposals

Atlantic Coast States Cooperative Planning for Right Whale Recovery

Purpose

The National Whale Conservation Fund (NWCF) was established to support research, management, conservation and education/outreach activities related to the conservation and recovery of whales (cetaceans). The NWCF is a special project of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization established by Congress in 1984. The Foundation operates the Fund under the direction of the National Whale Conservation Fund Advisory Council, a panel of conservation leaders and representatives of cooperating entities.

The Atlantic States Cooperative Planning for Right Whale Recovery is a partnership program between the NWCF and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to fund projects that have a strong likelihood of reducing death and serious injury to right whales through the development or implementation of recovery plan tasks.

Guiding Philosophy and Mission

NWCF seeks to foster the conservation and recovery of whales by supporting innovative research, management and education projects of high quality and promise. NWCF actively seeks to form new partnerships with corporations, organizations, and individuals to leverage NWCF's resources sufficiently to meet its aggressive conservation goals.

Who is eligible to apply?

Any Atlantic coast state government agency is eligible for funding. Applicants that propose to build on existing cooperative efforts with NOAA or to enter into additional collaboration with other states and/or federal agencies are encouraged. Matching funds are not required under this program.

How do I apply?

You can download an application via the Internet at <http://www.nfwf.org/pro->

grams/WhaleFund.htm. Application requests via mail or phone inquiries, should be directed to Michelle Pico at (202)857-0166.

What information should be included in my application?

- Proposals should reference a federal or state right whale recovery plan that requires the proposal activity or work to establish such a plan for the state.
- Applicants should demonstrate coordination and/or collaboration across state boundaries, with federal agency counterparts, with industry, and other interested parties where applicable.

What are the funding limitations for this grants program?

NWCF will not fund:

- Political advocacy, boycotts or litigation; and
- Indirect or unallocated expenses.

What kinds of proposals will be accepted?

Project funding priorities include:

- Ship strike mitigation to reduce right whale interactions via technology or other acceptable means, developing better understanding of right whale behavior and responses to approaching vessels, develop a merchant mariner training curriculum;
- Enforcement as it applies to individual or cooperative states;
- Gear investigation and testing to reduce entanglement;

- Disentanglement activities which will reduce mortality and/or serious injury of entangled whales; and
- Education and outreach programs to fishermen, mariners, recreational vessel operators (commercial and private), and the general public to facilitate reduction of gear interactions.

While this grant program focuses on five areas of emphases, the overarching goal of the program is to address right whale mortality, with priority given to those projects that work with the industry toward real solutions.

When are proposals due?

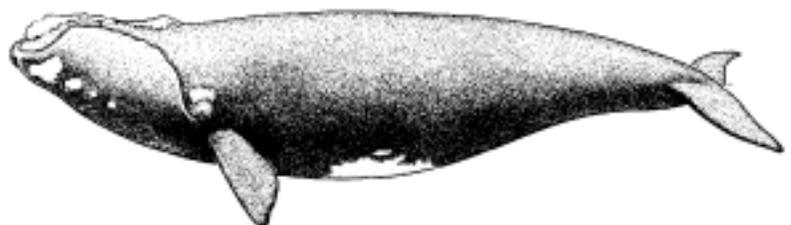
Proposals must be received via email, fax, by hand or through the mail, no later than **5:00PM EST on December 4, 2002.**

When will I hear about the status of our proposal?

Letters notifying all applicants of final funding decisions will be sent by March 1, 2003.

Whom can I contact with questions?

Atlantic Coast States Cooperative Planning for Right Whale Recovery is a collaborative effort between the NWCF and the NOAA. For more information, please contact Michelle Pico, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 1120 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC 20036; (202)857-0166 or via email at mpico@nfwf.org



ASMFC Northern Shrimp Section to Meet November 13 to Set 2003 Fishing Season: *Public Participation Welcomed*

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Northern Shrimp Section will be meeting on Wednesday, November 13, 2002, at the Urban Forestry Center, 45 Elwyn Road, Portsmouth, New Hampshire to set the 2003 fishing season regulations.

Each fall the Section meets with its Advisory Panel to review the most recent stock assessment information, gather public comment and establish the fishing season for the upcoming year. It is the one fishery in the Commission's process that simultaneously brings together fishery managers, scientists, the fishing industry and interested public to collectively develop each year's fishing regulations.

"The cooperative nature of northern shrimp management is the primary reason for the program's success and acceptability among fishermen," stated Robert E. Beal, Director, Interstate Fisheries Management Program. "Each year, fishery managers from Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts work hand-in-hand with the fishing industry to develop annual regulations that not only conserve the resource, but are also responsive to the needs of the fishing industry."

This year's meeting will take place Wednesday, November 13, 2002, at the Urban Forestry Center, 45 Elwyn Road, Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Proceedings will commence at 10:30 AM and continue until approximately 3:00 PM.

The 2002 stock assessment is scheduled to be available by the end of October and can be accessed via the Commission's webpage at www.asmfc.org. For more information, please contact Michael Lewis, Northern Shrimp Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or mlewis@asmfc.org.



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