



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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MEMORANDUM

To: Atlantic Menhaden Management Board
From: Atlantic Menhaden Technical Committee
RE: Quarterly Update on 2014 Benchmark Stock Assessment Progress
Date: April 25, 2014

In preparation for the 2014 benchmark stock assessment, the Atlantic menhaden Technical Committee (TC) and Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SAS) have held seven joint webinars and four in-person meetings to date. This fifth progress report memorandum contains a summary from three webinars of the SAS that occurred since the last progress report on January 29, 2014 (M14-006). The primary goal of these webinars was to finalize data preparations and preliminary analyses in advance of the Assessment Workshop.

The SAS will continue to meet regularly via webinar throughout 2014 to ensure steady progress on data analysis and modeling tasks. Final decision-making with regard to data inclusion (from among those sources presented at the 2014 Data Workshop) and modeling approaches will be made at the 2014 Assessment Workshop. Consideration of any data analyses and alternative models submitted by the public will occur at the 2014 Assessment Workshop as well. Final review of the benchmark stock assessment by the TC will occur in the fall of 2014 following the June Assessment Workshop.

Below is a brief summary of topics discussed and progress made at each meeting since January 2014. A tentative timeline for the 2014 Atlantic menhaden workshops follows.

February 28, March 13, and April 16, 2014 in-person meeting summary:

- Finalized bait landings statistics and estimates of weight-at-age, maturity-at-age, fecundity-at-age, and growth.
- Reviewed tagging data analyses and discussed potential ways in which the data could inform assessment models.
- Finalized treatment of individual fishery-dependent and fishery-independent indices. Reviewed estimates of spatial extent of each survey. Discussed potential methods for developing regional and coastwide indices of abundance from individual surveys.
- Discussed options for natural mortality estimation using MSVPA, tagging, and life history estimates.
- Reviewed updates on assessment model development.

Tentative timeline for 2014 Atlantic menhaden benchmark stock assessment:

June 2-5, 2014 – Assessment Workshop

December 2014 – Peer Review Workshop (SEDAR)