



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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MEMORANDUM

October 28, 2011

To: Atlantic Menhaden Management Board
From: Atlantic Menhaden Advisory Panel
RE: Advisory Panel Report to the Board on draft Addendum V

The Advisory Panel met on October 25, 2011 in Baltimore, MD to make recommendation to the Board on Draft Addendum V. Panel members in attendance represented the conservation community, commercial harvesters (for bait and reduction), bait dealers, and recreational fishermen. The following is a summary of the meeting.

Attendees

Advisory Panel Members

Bill Windley (MD), Chair
Ron Lukens (VA)
Jimmy Kellum (VA)
Brian Tarbox (ME)
Jeff Kaelin (NJ)
Ed Cherry (NJ)

Don Swanson (NH)
Jennie Bichrest (ME)
Ken Hinman (VA)
Donald Smith (RI)
ASMFC Staff
Toni Kerns

Mike Waine
Public
Shaun Gehan
Ross Kellum
Candy Thomson

Draft Addendum V

2.2.3.4 Ecological Role Section

The AP recommends that the ecological roles section of Amendment 1 be expanded to include more, context for the cause of mycobacteriosis, information regarding the ecological services of menhaden (e.g., predator prey relationships), and detail of the MSVPA X use in the current stock assessment (used to develop M estimates) and future stock assessments. These additions are recommended to be included in the next management document.

3.0 Social and Economic Impacts Section

The AP recommends that the Board add long term economic and social impacts, in addition to the short term to the next management document.

2.3.1 Reference points

Some AP members feel that changes to the reference points should not be made until the updated stock assessment is released in 2012.

Others feel that waiting for the next assessment is not necessary because the reference points are management targets and limits, and are independent of the results of an updated stock assessment.

Threshold

The AP had a split opinion on the threshold. Some favored status quo, while others favored a F15% MSP threshold.

The group agrees that there should be a level of protection for spawners. However, some feel they are already getting adequate protection while others feel that the level of protection for spawners should be increased.

Target

Some AP members feel that the fishery should be managed to the fishing mortality target, while others feel it should be managed towards the target, as to minimize the probability of approaching the threshold. The target is a buffer to accommodate for uncertainty in the assessment and the fishery.

Some members of the AP favor a F40% MSP target, some members favor a F15% MSP (Note that F15% MSP is outside of the range of options proposed in the document).

Comments leading to this recommendation,

- Some members favor a F40% MSP because they feel that this would be the greatest opportunity to bring menhaden back to their waters that was seen in the 1970-1980s. Some noted that a F30% MSP could be acceptable. It is important to leave fish in the waters for their ecological services including forage.
- Some AP members favor a F15% MSP target because they feel this level of spawning potential will keep the stock abundance (fecundity) at the target levels. Although this is less than what is in the document, it is acceptable as MSP is a new fishing mortality reference point being proposed for this stock.
- An AP member added that it acceptable that the Atlantic herring fishery is managed at an MSY level that is similar to a 10-15% MSP according to a conversation with a scientist on the Atlantic herring TC.
- Industry has funded an independent survey conducted by the University of New England. Preliminary results show that are adult menhaden north of New Jersey. The assessment assumes that fish do not occur outside the fishery area. They now have evidence with their independent survey they the spawning adults do occur outside the fishery zones.
- The intent of the target is to satisfy the ecological role of menhaden as forage for predatory species that other fisheries heavily rely on. This is not an interim action because the Board has been discussing this for a long period and the MSVPA will take time to develop and use for management purposes.
- The 20%MSP target option is the same as status quo.
- Environmental factors may be influencing where menhaden are migrating.
- Some AP members stated they are not seeing menhaden in northern waters like they used to see.

2.3.2.1 Recreational Fishery Management Measures

The AP supports status quo because the recreational fishery is insignificant when compared to the commercial fishery. The only viable measures are bag and size limits but they would be very difficult to enforce.

2.3.2.2 Commercial Fishery Management Measures

Most of the group recommend that an amendment must be considered for the suite of commercial management measures being considered in Addendum V, not a follow-up addendum.

The AP recommended that all the measures proposed in the commercial fishery management tools section of draft Addendum V be explored in a future management document. The AP stated that the Board is prematurely asking for direction on management tools, and the AP should be asked for recommendations on how to manage the fishery after the Board has made a decision on reference points, but before a second document is approved for public comment.

General comments and suggestions regarding draft Addendum V:

- What percentage of the total stock does the existing fishing mortality reference point protect?
- A lot of people are referring to the vast overfishing in the time series, but that has nothing to do with the current status. The most important time series to look at when considering if overfishing is occurring is the most recent years.
- Why are early landings being grouped in bait catch if those landings were going to the reduction industry?
- Peer review recommendation of alternative reference points came when overfishing was not occurring. The peer review recommended alternative reference points to protect more SSB.
- The PDT recommendations for this document say that they can't discern that there is a stock recruitment relationship; it's not that there is no relationship. Spawning stock may take more advantage of favorable environment if more spawners are left in the water.
- How many ASMFC fisheries are actually managed at the target?

AP Leadership Changes

Jule Wheatly recently passed away and there was a need to elect a Chair and Vice Chair.

Bill Windley was elected as Chair, and Jeff Kaelin was elected as Vice Chair.