



ASMFC

FISHERIES *focus*

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

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

ASMFC Initiates Development of 2004 - 2008 Strategic Plan Public Participation Sought throughout Development Process

As the first step in charting the course of its activities for the next five years, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission met during its June meeting week to identify challenges and opportunities in Atlantic coastal fisheries conservation and management, and articulate goals for the future. The Commissioners also affirmed their commitment to the Commission's vision of achieving healthy, self-sustaining populations of all Atlantic coast fish species or of successful restoration well underway by the year 2015.

issues, data collection and management, fisheries governance, socioeconomic concerns, law enforcement and legal/legislative activities. These issues and others are detailed in a Source Document to the Strategic Planning Workshop, available on the Commission website. The document is intended to summarize the activities and discussions of the Workshop, serve as a reference for both Workshop attendees and those who were not able to attend, as well as provide a vehicle to begin to solicit public input.

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During the Strategic Planning Workshop, Commissioners reviewed the current plan (1999 - 2003), evaluated accomplishments, and outlined driving forces and priorities the new Strategic Plan should address. Identified challenges and opportunities included funding, education and outreach, fisheries conservation and management, ecosystem/multispecies based management, habitat, conflict resolution to address polarization of

"A critical component of this process will be the active participation and input of Commission partners, stakeholders and constituents," stated ASMFC Executive Director, John V. O'Shea. "At this point, we want to hear from folks about their concerns regarding fisheries conservation and management along the coast, and their ideas on how Commission priorities can be refocused to more effectively achieve our Vision."

The Commission is seeking input through its website (www.asmfc.org), asking the public to identify issues and concerns with fisheries conservation and management along the coast, as well as to provide suggestions for future actions. This feedback will ensure the Commission considers publicly-identified issues during its strategic planning.

ASMFC Chair, John I. Nelson, Jr. of New Hampshire added, "Commissioners highly value public input and participation in all ASMFC activities and programs. In this case, the public has a unique opportunity to help chart the future of Atlantic coastal fisheries conservation and management. Please take the time to share with us your vision for the future."

Your input can be submitted to the Commission at the address or fax number below, or via email at comments@asmfc.org. Comments received through mid-July will be considered in the development of a first draft of the Strategic Plan. The next opportunity for public comment will be in August with the release of the first draft.

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

John I. Nelson, Jr. (NH), Chair
Preston Paté, Jr. (NC), Vice-Chair

John V. O'Shea, Executive Director
Robert E. Beal, Director, Interstate Fisheries Management Program
Dr. Lisa L. Kline, Director of Research & Statistics
Laura C. Leach, Director of Finance & Administration

Tina L. Berger, Editor
tberger@asmfc.org

(202)289-6400 Phone • (202)289-6051 Fax
www.asmfc.org

Upcoming Meetings

7/8 & 9:

ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee, Marriott Newport Rhode Island, 25 America's Cup Avenue, Newport, Rhode Island.

7/8 - 10:

ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment Workshop, National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Fisheries Science Center, 101 Pivers Island Road, Beaufort, North Carolina.

7/9 (10 AM - 5 PM) & 10 (9 AM - 3 PM):

ASMFC Striped Bass Tagging Subcommittee, Sheraton Hotel at BWI, 7032 Elm Road, Baltimore, Maryland.

7/14 (10 AM - 5 PM):

ASMFC Atlantic Herring Section, Holiday Inn by the Bay, 88 Spring St., Portland, Maine.

7/15 & 16:

ASMFC American Lobster Technical Committee, Hampton Inn New Bedford, 1 Hampton Way, Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

7/15 - 17:

New England Fishery Management Council, Holiday Inn by the Bay, Portland, Maine.

7/22 - 24:

ASMFC Striped Bass Stock Assessment Subcommittee, Sheraton Hotel at T.F. Green Airport, 1850 Post Road, Warwick, Rhode Island.

8/5 - 7:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Wyndham Hotel & Resort, 101 West Fayette Street, Baltimore Inner Harbor, Maryland.

8/5 - 7:

Southeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (SEAMAP) Annual Meeting, Hilton Myrtle Beach, 10000 Beach Club Drive, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

8/10 - 14:

American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting, Quebec City, Quebec, Canada.

8/25 - 28:

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

9/8 & 9:

ACCSP Advisory Committee, location to be determined.

If you spend any time in fisheries management, you will soon appreciate the broad cross section of people from all fields who share a common and enthusiastic interest in marine fisheries and their sustainable management. While most in this arena can easily be described as passionate, a few truly exceptional individuals stand out for their ideas and accomplishments. The highlight of the Commission's Spring Meeting Week was our Annual Awards of Excellence ceremony, recognizing those who have made a positive difference in managing and conserving Atlantic coastal fisheries. Here is a summary of their special efforts.

John Mason of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation received the management and policy award. For nearly a quarter of a century, he served on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and on countless ASMFC species management boards and committees. A founding visionary of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) and charter member of the ACCSP Operations Committee, Mr. Mason has tirelessly advocated a robust fisheries data collection system to support effective fisheries management.

Jean Flemma, now Executive Director of the Prairie Rivers Network, was recognized for her 13 years of service on the House Committee on Resources and its predecessor, the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. She established herself as a true friend of the Commission and supporter of Atlantic coastal fisheries management, lending her expertise and conservation ethic to many important fisheries laws. These include the Striped Bass Conservation Act of 1984, the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act of 1993, and the Sustainable Fisheries Act of 1996. Her contributions will help ensure there are ample stocks of Atlantic coastal fish for future generations to enjoy.

Dr. Stu Kennedy of the Florida Marine Research Institute was recognized for his scientific, technical and advisory contributions. Since 1976, Dr. Kennedy has advised the Commission as a member the South Atlantic Board, the ISFMP Policy Board and the Management and Science Committee (MSC). Dedicated to the collection and management of sound fisheries data, he was a key architect of the ACCSP. He was a driving force in working with state agencies to establish the cooperative shrimp statistics program. This initiative has become the model in the Southeast region for other important data programs such as SEAMAP, COMFIN and MARFIN.

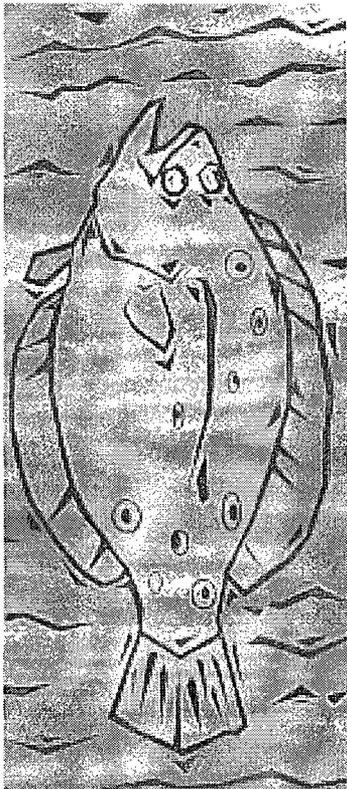
Dr. Eileen Setzler-Hamilton and Colonel Clarence Wayne Lee were posthumously recognized for their passionate commitment to marine resource conservation and management. For nearly 20 years, Dr. Setzler-Hamilton represented the Potomac River Fisheries Commission on the MSC and species technical committees for American eel, Atlantic striped bass, and shad and river herring. Dr. Setzler-Hamilton loved the Chesapeake Bay and was committed to preserving its resources through her work as a researcher for the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory.

A gentleman and true conservationist, Colonel Lee supported the Commission since the mid-1990s, serving as North Carolina's recreational fishing representative on striped bass, summer flounder and weakfish advisory panels. He chaired the Weakfish AP, guiding it through the development of Amendment 4. In that position, he was respected by all for his thoroughness, fairness, and leadership. Most recently, Colonel Lee was Vice-Chair of the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council. Colonel Lee served his country through a long and distinguished career in the U.S. Air Force officer and was a decorated Vietnam veteran.

Sergeant Francis Floor of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and Special Agent Kevin Flanagan of NOAA Fisheries, Office of Law Enforcement were recognized for their work in the area of law enforcement. As part of a joint effort, they diligently persevered over countless obstacles to expose a fish dealer for fraudulently reporting the purchase and sale of summer flounder. Their investigation ultimately led to a \$225,000 fine from NOAA Fisheries for filing false reports and a \$50,000 fine from Rhode Island for 75 counts of illegal sales of summer flounder.

The entire New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife, Marine Law Enforcement Region, District 8 was honored for its work in the area of law enforcement. District 8 officers uncovered a large-scale illegal commercial sea bass and tautog fishery occurring on a party boat. The 14-month investigation documented over 150 violations, involving 22 individuals including the captain, owner and mates. Resultant penalties totaled more than \$48,000, sending a strong signal about the importance of fisheries conservation laws and the commitment of the State of New Jersey to enforce them.

Congratulations again to all of the recipients. They represent a small portion of so many people who freely give their time and talent to support the Commission process and make it work. To you all, I say, thank you, and well done!



Pleuronectes americanus

Class: Pleuronectidae

Common Names:
blackback, lemon sole,
flounder, flat fish, mud
dab, black flounder

Species Range: Labrador,
Canada to Georgia, USA

Largest Recorded: 25
inches, 8 lbs. 2 oz.

Oldest Recorded: 20
years

Stock Status:
GOM - not overfished
and overfishing is not
occurring
SNE/MA - overfished
and overfishing is
occurring

Age at Maturity:
GOM - 86% mature by
age 4
SNE/MA - 95%
mature by age 4

Age at Recruitment:
GOM - fully recruited
at age 5 (12")
SNE/MA - fully
recruited at age 4 (12")

Species Profile: Winter Flounder New ASMFC Amendment Under Development

Introduction

Winter flounder are an important commercial and recreational fish throughout New England and the Mid-Atlantic, although both fisheries are at a fraction of what they once were historically. Inshore habitat degradation and overfishing have contributed to serious stock declines throughout the species' range. However, efforts of the Atlantic coastal states and the New England Fishery Management Council (Council) to reduce fishing mortality and identify essential habitat have allowed stocks to begin to recover. The Gulf of Maine (GOM) stock has shown the greatest improvement, with the current estimate of spawning stock biomass well above the target established in the federal plan. The Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) stock, however, still has a long way to go. The Commission amendment, currently under development, will seek to continue the recovery of the GOM stock and to rebuild the SNE/MA stock.

Life History

Winter flounder are found in estuaries, coastal waters, and offshore fishing banks of the Atlantic coast from Labrador, Canada to Georgia in the U.S., but are most common from southern Newfoundland to the Chesapeake Bay. Adults spawn from winter through spring and tend to return to the same spawning grounds every year. Females usually produce between 500,000 to 1.5 million eggs, but up to 3.3 million have been reported. Temperature and salinity appear to control survival of eggs during the two to three months of larval development. Larvae settle to the bottom as metamorphosis approaches at about five to six weeks after hatching. After eight weeks, the left eye migrates to the right side of the body and metamorphosis is complete. Young-of-the-year and some one year-old fish remain in natal estuaries throughout the year. Juvenile flounder prefer sand or sand-silt bottoms and tolerate a wide range of salinity (from fresh to saltwater) and temperature (32-77°F). Predatory fish such as striped bass and bluefish, as well as birds, invertebrates, and marine mammals prey on the larvae and juveniles.

Research has found substantial variability in length and age of winter flounder by region, with faster growth occurring in southern waters. Winter flounder undertake a generalized seasonal migration, with adults typically leaving nearshore waters during summer months for cooler, deeper, offshore waters. Their movements may also depend on the availability of food. Flounder move back into shoal waters with declining autumn temperatures. Winter flounder north of Cape Cod make localized migrations and remain nearshore, while south of Cape Cod winter flounder disperse a considerable distance offshore.

Commercial & Recreational Fisheries

Gulf of Maine

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, commercial landings from the GOM stock fluctuated around 2.2 million pounds. In 1982, landings peaked at 6.0 million pounds and then steadily declined to a time series low of 701,190 pounds in 1999. This decline may be attributed to extended spring closures in the Gulf of Maine. Landings have remained near 1.1 million pounds since 1999. Recreational landings from the GOM stock fluctuated around 4.4 million pounds in the early 1980s before declining to under 220,000 pounds in 1991. Recreational landings have remained below 220,000 pounds since 1995. On average, recreational landings comprised 40 percent of the total catch from 1979-1990. Since 1991, recreational landings have comprised between five and 13 percent of the total landings.

Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic

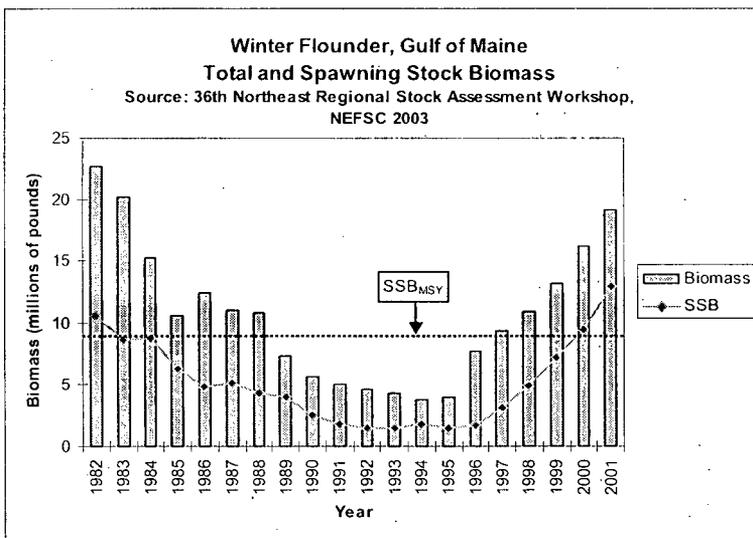
Commercial landings from the SNE/MA stock averaged 18.7 million pounds from 1964 to 1972 before declining to around 10.6 million pounds throughout the mid- to late 1970s. Landings increased in the early 1980s to a record high of 24.6 million pounds,

but then declined to an all-time low of 4.9 million pounds in 1994. Commercial landings in 2001 were 9.7 million pounds, with the majority of those landings coming from offshore areas (>3 miles). Recreational landings from the SNE/MA stock peaked at 12.7 million pounds in 1984 before declining to a low of 844,515 pounds in 1992. Landings have ranged between 1.2 and 1.5 million pounds in recent years, with 2001 landings estimated at 1.2 million pounds. On average, recreational landings comprised 27 percent of the total landings (1981-1996).

Stock Status

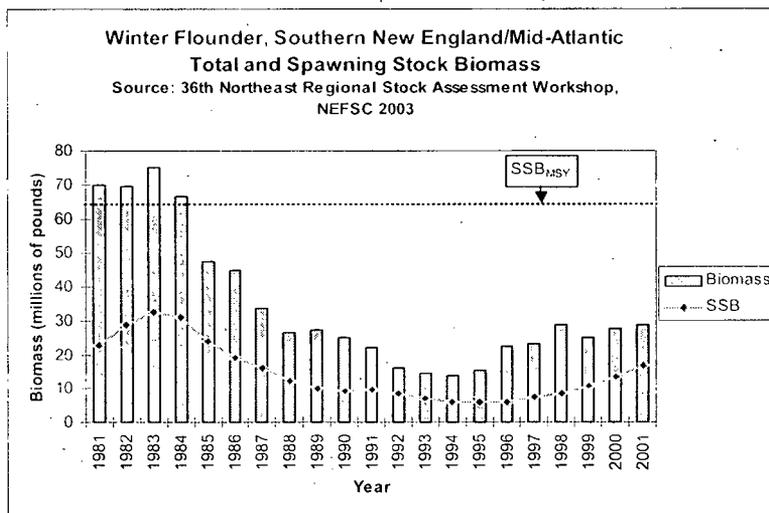
Gulf of Maine

In December 2002, the 36th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop/Stock Assessment Review Committee (SAW/SARC) concluded the GOM winter flounder stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. Fishing mortality in 2001 was well below the estimate of F_{msy} , and spawning stock biomass in 2001 was estimated to be about 44 percent above the estimate of B_{msy} (see figure below). The average recruitment from 1982 to 2001 is 6.7 million age-1 fish. Recruitment to the stock has been above or near average since 1995.



Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic

The 36th SAW/SARC concluded the SNE/MA winter flounder stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring. Fishing mortality in 2001 was well above F_{msy} , and spawning stock biomass in 2001 was estimated to be about 25 percent of the estimate of B_{msy} (see figure above right). The average recruitment from 1981 to 2001 was 23.9 million age-1 fish. Recruitment to the stock has been below average since 1989. The 2001 year class, with only 5.6 million fish, is the smallest in the 22-year VPA time series.



Atlantic Coastal Management Considerations

Winter flounder are cooperatively managed by the Commission and the Council. The stock is divided into three management units (1) the GOM unit, ranging north of Cape Cod, (2) the SNE/MA unit, extending from south of Cape Cod to the Delaware-Maryland border; and (3) the Georges Bank unit, occurring in federal waters.

The Commission Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Inshore Stocks of Winter Flounder addresses the first two management units. The FMP and subsequent Addenda contain specific fishery management measures to reduce fishing mortality over several years, with the ultimate target of F_{40} (a rate that would allow the population size of the spawners to remain at 40 percent of an unfished population) by 1999.

The Commission is currently amending the FMP to revise the objectives of the management program, update overfishing definitions and fishing mortality targets, and identify FMP compliance components as mandated by the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act of 1993.

The first step in this process is the widespread distribution of a Public Information Document (PID) to facilitate public comment on future winter flounder conservation and management activities. The PID outlines nine specific issues that may be addressed in Amendment 1. Each issue is accompanied by a series of questions designed to focus public comment. The PID will be available for public comment by the beginning of July, with state hearings scheduled in late July and early August. The Management Board is scheduled to meet in August to review public comment from the PID and identify potential management alternatives to be included in the first draft of the amendment. Final amendment approval is scheduled for spring 2004. For more information on the PID and the amendment process, please see page 8 of this issue.

ASMFC Lobster Board Initiates Development of Draft Addendum to Address Stock Declines in Area 2

In response to declines in the lobster resource in the waters off of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, the Commission's American Lobster Management Board has called for the development of a Draft Addendum to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. To initiate the process, the Board has directed staff to prepare a list of options for inclusion in the Draft Addendum that will allow for stock rebuilding in Area 2. This draft will be presented to the Board for its consideration in August.

"The development of this Addendum shows the Board's desire to move forward in a timely way to address some pressing issues in American lobster management," stated Board Chair, George Lapointe of Maine. "Public comment will be a particularly important component of this process, given that the measures being considered for Area 2 will be incredibly tough because of the

condition of the resource. The Commission is committed to providing adequate public input and working cooperatively with Area 2 fishermen to rebuild the lobster resource in this region."

In March 2003, based on concern for stock declines in Area 2, the Lobster Board took Emergency Action to increase the minimum size of lobsters landed in Area 2 to 3 3/8 inches by July 1, 2003. As part of this action, the Board committed to proceeding with the development of a Draft Addendum, outlining additional measures to reduce the fishing mortality rate in Area 2 to a level that will allow for stock rebuilding.

Another issue to be addressed in the Draft Addendum is a proposal brought forward by the Area 3 Lobster Conservation Management Team (offshore waters) to institute an active trap reduction schedule for years 2007 and 2008, as well as a trap transferability program.



Additionally, the Draft Addendum will propose a change to the circular vent size from 2 1/2 inches to 2 5/8 inches to be compatible with a 2-inch rectangular vent size. Lastly, the Board moved forward with a proposed modification to the interpretation of the most restrictive rule for multi-area fishermen.

The Board is scheduled to meet in August to further discuss these issues. Upon approval by the Board, the Draft Addendum will be made available for public comment. The Commission anticipates holding public hearings later in 2003. For more information, please contact Carrie Selberg, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or <cselberg@asmfc.org>.

ASMFC Spiny Dogfish Board Maintains 8.8 Million Pound Quota for 2003 - 2004 Fishing Year

Following significant and lengthy discussion, the Commission's Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Shark Management Board chose to maintain its 2003 - 2004 annual specifications for the spiny dogfish fishery. The decision to revisit the issue was motivated by concern that some information was not vetted through the Commission's Spiny Dogfish Technical Committee prior to the Board taking action on annual specifications.

After reviewing the Technical Committee's advice, the Board declined to change the coastwide quota of 8.8 million for the current fishing year (May

1, 2003 though April 30, 2004), maintaining that it meets the Plan's fishing mortality target of 0.03. Further, the Board concluded implementing this quota for one year would not compromise the spawning stock biomass rebuilding goals. The Board's decision was based on evidence from the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries that a small scale directed fishery can be executed with virtually no discard mortality on spiny dogfish. The Board noted that the 4.8 million pound difference between the federal and state quotas represents about 0.6% of the total spiny dogfish biomass.

Additionally, the Board discussed concerns raised by the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission regarding the state's access to the resource under the regional allocation scheme. The Board decided to remain with the scheme developed in February 2003, with 57.9 percent (5,095,200 pounds) of the quota allocated to Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts and 42.1 percent (3,704,800 pounds) allocated to Rhode Island and states south. However, State Directors committed to working with staff to ensure that all states

continued on page 9

Board Postpones Action on Summer Flounder Addendum VIII: Technical Committee Charged to Conduct Further Analyses

The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board delayed approving Addendum VIII to the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP), and charged its Technical Committee with evaluating alternative measures to constrain the recreational fishery to its annual quota. This action was taken following a review of extensive public comment provided at the Board's June meeting and gathered through state public hearings and written correspondence over the last couple of months. Once completed, the Board intends to review the supplemental analysis and take final action on the Addendum later this year.

"The Board's decision to postpone action of Addendum VIII reflects its de-

sire to adopt a management program that is acceptable to recreational anglers and commercial fishermen alike," stated Board Chair Bruce Freeman of New Jersey. "The Board is committed to developing a management program that continues the rebuilding of the summer flounder resource and ensures that all sectors have the opportunity to land their annual allocation, while not exceeding it."

Addendum VIII was developed to address the issue of summer flounder recreational fishery overages, which, with the exception of 2002, have been a persistent and significant problem since 1996. The Draft Addendum was available for public comment throughout April and May. It provided a suite of management options for the recreational

summer flounder fishery, including repayment of harvest overages in the subsequent year(s), carry-over of unused recreational harvest from one year to the next, and allocation of commercial quota based on a total allowable landings (TAL) limits calculated without recreational overages. It also included the option to maintain the existing management system.

The Board also approved 2003 scup recreational management measures for the States of Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York, concluding they were consistent with the requirements of Addendum VII to the FMP. For more information, please contact Robert Beal, Director, Interstate Fisheries Management Program, at (202)289-6400 or <rbeal@asmfc.org>.

ASMFC Horseshoe Crab Board Approves Development of Draft Addendum

The Commission's Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved the development of a Draft Addendum to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Horseshoe Crab to further conservation of horseshoe crab and migratory shorebird populations. The Draft Addendum will include options to reduce harvest, implement seasonal closures and revise the Plan's monitoring requirements.

This action responds to recommendations of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Shorebird Technical Committee to reduce horseshoe crab harvest in New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland. The intent is to increase the abundance of horseshoe crabs and their eggs to meet the energetic requirements of migratory shorebirds that stopover in Delaware Bay. In a related action, the Board agreed to request the States of New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland voluntarily implement harvest restrictions and seasonal closures prior to the adoption of the Addendum.

Recognizing the need for ongoing research and monitoring of the horseshoe crab-shorebird interaction, the Board has requested the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continue supporting the activities of the Shorebird Techni-

cal Committee. The Board cited the excellent work that the Committee has done to improve knowledge of shorebird and horseshoe crab population status and interaction. The Board indicated that the Committee would serve as an important resource in the future, complementing the Commission's Horseshoe Crab Technical Committee. The first task of these Committees will be to provide guidance to the Board in implementing the recommendations of the Shorebird Technical Committee's report.

"Coordination of this Committee with the Commission's Horseshoe Crab Technical Committee is critical to the Commission making informed decisions on horseshoe crab management and its implications on migratory shorebird populations," stated ISFMP Director, Robert Beal. "We hope that the Service will be able to maintain this important and productive state-federal partnership."

For more information, please contact Braddock Spear, Horseshoe Crab Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or <bspear@asmfc.org>.

ASMFC Releases Winter Flounder PID for Public Comment States to Hold Hearings in Late July & Early August

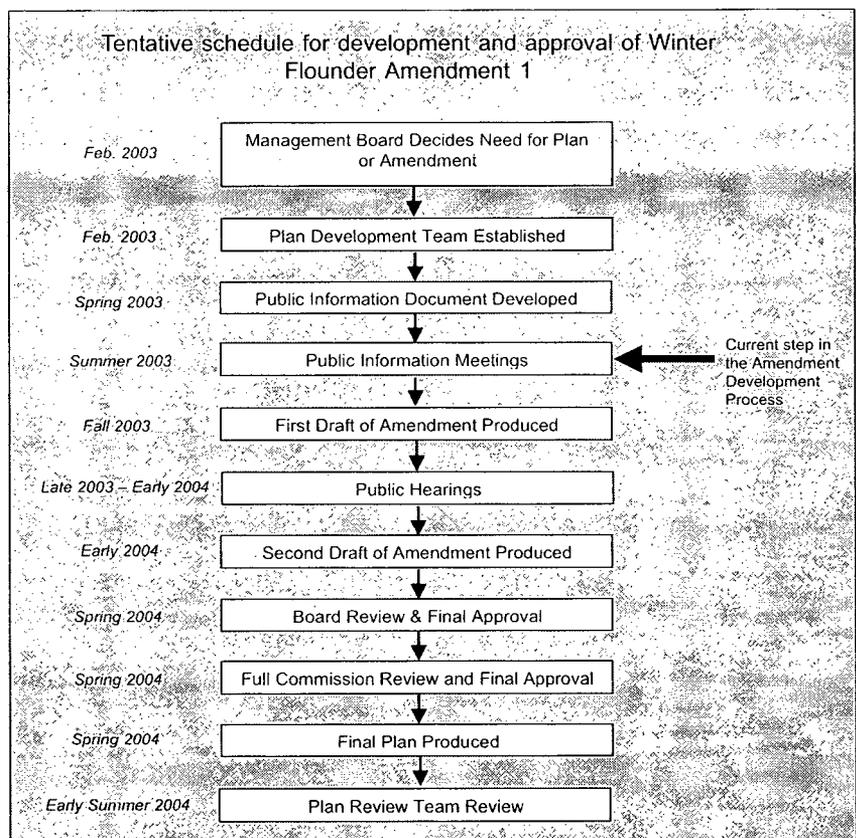
The Commission's Winter Flounder Management Board has approved the Public Information Document (PID) for Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Inshore Stocks of Winter Flounder for public review and comment. In addition to providing information on winter flounder management, commercial and recreational fisheries, and stock status, the PID outlines several issues for public comment. These include updating plan objectives; redefining plan targets, thresholds, and rebuilding goals; assessing habitat needs; and standardizing the management programs of the Commission and New England Fishery Management Council. The PID also seeks input on broader management and research issues such as declining recruitment, the effects of predation on winter flounder, and the inshore/offshore movements of winter flounder stocks at lower levels of biomass.

The Commission is currently amending the FMP to revise the objectives of the management program, update overfishing definitions and fishing mortality targets, and identify FMP compliance criteria as mandated by the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act of 1993. Updated overfishing definitions and fishing mortality targets are needed based on the results of the most recent stock assessments for the Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) and Gulf of Maine (GOM) winter flounder stocks. Specifically, the SNE/MA stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring, and a reduction in fishing mortality is needed to rebuild the stock to sustainable levels of biomass. While the GOM stock was determined to be not overfished and overfishing is not occurring, limited data and a lack of observed fish from the northern part of the species range raises concern about the possibility of localized depletion in inshore areas north of Massachusetts.

Publication of the PID and announcement of the Commission's intent to amend the existing Winter Flounder FMP is the first step of the formal amendment process. Following the initial phase of information-gathering and public comment, the Commission will identify the potential management alternatives and issues to be included in the first draft of the amendment. Upon approval, the draft amendment will be made available for public review and comment. After this review and further consideration by the Board, a final draft will be developed for Board approval. Currently, the final amendment approval is slated for spring 2004. A tentative schedule for completion of Amendment 1 is shown in the figure below. Please note the dates may change if the Management Board or Technical Committee needs additional time to complete any of the listed tasks.

It is anticipated that most states from Maine through Delaware will be conducting public hearings on the PID in late July and early August. The Commission will provide the details of those hearings once they become available.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the PID, either through attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies of the PID can be obtained by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400 or via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org. Public comment will be accepted until Friday, August 22, 2003, and should be forwarded to Lydia Munger, Winter Flounder FMP Coordinator, 1444 Eye Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-6051 (FAX) or at lmunger@asmfc.org. For more information, please contact Lydia Munger at (202) 289-6400.



Dogfish Board Maintains 8.8 Million Pound Quota (continued from page 6)

would have an opportunity to harvest the available regional quota. As a first step, the Board approved a regional overage penalty, deducting the overage from the responsible region's quota in the subsequent fishing year.

The Board will meet this fall to determine the annual specifications for the 2004 – 2005 fishing year, as required by the Interstate Fishery Management Plan. For more information, please contact Megan Gamble, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or <mgamble@asmfc.org>.

ASMFC Seeks Nominations for David H. Hart Award

Nominations are being sought for the Thirteenth Annual Captain David H. Hart Award. This award will be presented at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's 62nd Annual Meeting in New York City, December 14-18, 2003.

Anyone associated with the activities of the Commission is encouraged to nominate worthy candidates. A "worthy candidate" is an individual (or individuals) who has (have) contributed to the betterment of the fisheries of the Atlantic coast through significant biological, legislative, enforcement or management activities. The nomination should include a description of the candidate's achievements and their effect on the fisheries of the Atlantic coast. Candidates nominated but not selected in previous years will not be carried over. Anyone wishing to renominate those individuals is encouraged to do so. Selection will be based on specific accomplishments and other information included in the letter of nomination.

Nominations will be accepted until July 18, 2003 and should be sent to Laura C. Leach, Director of Finance & Administration, at 1444 Eye Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-6051 (FAX) or via email at <lleach@asmfc.org>. Please indicate on your nomination that it is a confidential document.

The Commission instituted the "Captain David H. Hart Award" in 1991 to recognize individuals who have significantly advanced marine fisheries conservation and management along the Atlantic coast. The award is named after the Commission's oldest and longest-serving member, a Governor's Appointee from New Jersey who was dedicated to the advancement and protection of marine fishery resources. Past award recipients are:

David V.D. Borden, Assistant Director for Natural Resource Development and Protection, Rhode Island Department

of Environmental Management

Robert K. Mahood, Executive Director, South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 2001

Susan Shipman, Chief of Marine Fisheries, Georgia Coastal Resources Division, 2000

Gordon C. Colvin, Director of Marine Resources for the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 1999

Sergeant Robert Babula, Conservation Officer, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, 1998

David M. Cupka, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, 1997

Philip G. Coates, Director, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, 1996

David G. Deuel, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1995

Richard H. Schaefer, Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation & Management, National Marine Fisheries Service, 1994

Dr. Edwin B. Joseph, South Carolina Wildlife & Marine Resources, 1993

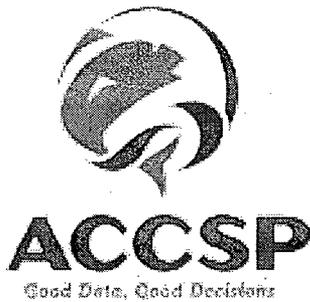
Representative Walter B. Jones of North Carolina, 1992

Irwin M. Alperin, Executive Director, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, 1991

ASMFC Comings & Goings

Rhonda Ellis -- In May, Rhonda joined the Commission staff as Office Clerk, working part-time to assist the administrative staff with their various responsibilities. Welcome aboard, Rhonda!

Joe Moran -- In May, Commission staff bid farewell to Joe Moran as he left to pursue a new career opportunity with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Fish Hatchery System, Policy Development and Budget Branch. Joe worked at the Commission for the last four years, most recently as Fisheries Specialist for Research and Statistics and before that as Program Manager for the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP). His work with the Research and Statistics Program included coordination of the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program and the Commission's Committee on Economics and Social Sciences. He also worked on issues related to circle hooks and striped bass ageing protocols. As ACCSP Program Manager, Joe was involved in the creation of most of the ACCSP's programmatic documents, including the ACCSP Program Design, Funding Decision Guidelines, Confidentiality Protocols, and the bycatch and discards module. We wish Joe the very best in new his new position; he is sure to be a valuable asset!



State and Federal Marine Fisheries Agencies Begin Survey of Recreational Fishing Vessels on the Atlantic Coast

In early June, the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program announced the launch of the For-Hire Survey, a standardized data collection system designed to improve recreational fishing and biological information from charter boats and party/headboats, providing fishery managers with more credible data for responsible management of Atlantic fish stocks.

The For-Hire Survey collects: (1) fishing effort data (such as numbers of trips and passengers taken in a given week) through a telephone survey, sampling ten percent of for-hire vessels each week, (2) catch data through in-person interviews with for-hire patrons at dockside access-points, and (3) validation data (through dockside observations) to correct for reporting errors. Catch interviews are ongoing since 1981, as part of the Marine Recreational Fisheries Statistics Survey (MRFSS), but the new approach for charter and headboats began June 9, 2003.

"The traditional MRFSS never gave us adequate estimates of catch and effort from charter boats and headboats. It's better suited to private boats and shore fishing," said Bruce Joule of the Maine Department of Marine Resources. "The modified For-Hire procedure has proven a far better method for getting information from the for-hire industry, both in statistical accuracy and precision."

The For-Hire Survey began in Maine in 1995, and spread to the Gulf of Mexico, Florida, and California based on its success. Twelve other Atlantic coastal states have now adopted the For-Hire Survey as the preferred methodology for collecting data from the for-hire sector. They are New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

The For-Hire Survey is not designed to replace for-hire logbook programs mandated by statute, such as NOAA Fisheries Northeast Region's vessel trip reports and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' logbook program. However, the survey will be integrated with these programs to minimize reporting burden on vessel captains.

Given the success of the For-Hire Survey in other areas, the resource managers of Connecticut, South Carolina, and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission plan to phase out their logbook requirements for vessels for-hire following a benchmarking period with the new survey.

In addition to the catch and effort data collected through the For-Hire Survey, the party/headboat fleet will also be randomly selected to carry at-sea samplers. Trained personnel will pay the selected vessel's usual fare to collect length and weight measurements on caught and released species, as well as other biological data while the boat is at sea. Combined with other data from the For-Hire Survey, biological and bycatch data will help support stock assessment science.

"We are pleased that the state and federal partners of the Atlantic coast have adopted the For-Hire Survey," said Maury Osborn, Director of the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), a partnership of 23 state and federal fishery management agencies. "This is the single largest improvement that could be made to the accuracy and precision of data for the for-hire fishery."

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 Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the three Atlantic fishery management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, D.C. Fisheries and Wildlife Division, NOAA Fisheries 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>; or visit www.accsp.org.

ASMFC Annual Awards of Excellence Recipients Celebrate!

On June 10, 2003, state and federal fisheries managers, scientists and fishermen recognized the contributions of several outstanding individuals to the conservation and management Atlantic coastal resources at an evening reception of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Commission Chair, John I. Nelson, Jr. and Awards Committee Chair, David Cupka had the honor of leading the ceremony of the Commission's Fifth Annual Awards of Excellence, presenting awards in the areas of legislation, law enforcement, management & policy, and scientific, technical & advisory contributions.

In his Executive Director's Column, John V. O'Shea provides the details of the awards and the award recipients: Here are the pictures.



Opposite picture (from left to right): The Officers of the New Jersey Division of Fish & Wildlife, Marine Law Enforcement Region, District 8 -- Captain Joseph J. Meyer, Conservation Officer Jason Snellbaker, Conservation Officer Mark Canale, Lieutenant Gregory Honachefsky, and Lieutenant Karl P. Yungmans -- with ASMFC Executive Director, John V. O'Shea.

Opposite picture (from left to right): Special Agent Kevin Flanagan of NOAA Fisheries, Office of Law Enforcement, Mr. Joe Hamilton (accepting for the late Dr. Eileen Setzler-Hamilton), Sergeant Francis Floor of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Mrs. Kay Lee and Mrs. Cathey Lancaster (accepting for the late Colonel Wayne Lee), Dr. Stu Kennedy of the Florida Marine Research Institute, and Ms. Catherine Ware (accepting for Ms. Jean Flemma).



Opposite picture (from left to right): ASMFC Chair, John I. Nelson Jr. of New Hampshire, ASMFC Executive Director, John V. O'Shea and Awards Committee Chair, David Cupka of South Carolina join Mrs. Kay Lee and Mrs. Cathey Lancaster as they accept the award on behalf of their husband and father, respectively, the late Colonel Wayne Lee.

Opposite picture (from left to right): Mr. Joe Hamilton accepts the AAE Award on behalf of his late wife, Dr. Eileen Setzler-Hamilton from Awards Committee Chair, David Cupka of South Carolina.



Errata

The lead article in last month's issue of *Fisheries Focus* presented the current research and issues surrounding the use of circle hooks. The table below revises the one that appears on page 6 of the May 2003 issue (see Lukakovic '00). Revisions have also been made to the Draft Circle Hook White Paper, referred to in the article and available on the ASMFC website (www.asmfc.org).

Author (yr)	Species	Hook Type	Hook Location			% Mortality
			Jaw/Mouth	Deep	Foul	
Caruso (00)	Striped Bass	Circle "J"	97%	2%	2%	3%
			60%	24%	16%	16%
Lukakovic (00)	Striped Bass	Circle "J"	97%	3%		1%*
			83%	17%		9%*
Skomal et al. (02)	Bluefin Tuna	Circle "J"	94%	2%	2%	4%
			62%	34%	4%	28%
Aguilar et al. (02)	Red Drum	Circle "J"	96%	4%		0
			48%	52%		9%

* Mortality data for air temperature <95 degrees Fahrenheit

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1444 Eye Street, N.W., 6th Floor
Washington D.C. 20005

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