



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 Summer Meeting

August 15 – 18, 2005
Radisson Hotel Old Town
Alexandria, Virginia

Final Agenda

Please note: The final agenda is subject to change. The Commission may adjust this agenda in accordance with the actual duration of Board meetings. Interested parties should anticipate Boards starting earlier or later than indicated below. In addition, there have been minor changes made to the meeting times of the Habitat Committee and Management Boards for Winter Flounder, American Eel, Atlantic Menhaden, and South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries.

Monday, August 15, 2005

10:00 AM – 5:00 PM Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program Coordinating Council

Tuesday, August 16, 2005

8:00 AM – 11:00 AM Weakfish Management Board

- Public Comment
- Technical Committee Report
- Draft Addendum I: Management Options and Sampling Program -- ACTION

Noon – 4:00 PM American Lobster Workshop

The intent of this workshop is to initiate discussions of potential future directions in lobster data collection and management. No management action will take place.

- Data Collection
- Potential Changes to Lobster Management
- Technical Committee Support
- Communications
 - Between Technical Committee, Advisory Panel, and Board — open dialogue, written reports, joint meetings
- Whales
 - Implications of whale take reductions efforts
- Wrap-up

10:00 AM – 4:00 PM Habitat Committee

- Activities Update
- National Fish Habitat Initiative Program Update
- Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership
- Habitat Sections -- Atlantic Croaker

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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

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Upcoming Meetings

8/15 - 18:

ASMFC Meeting Week, Radisson Hotel Old Town Alexandria, 901 North Fairfax, Alexandria, Virginia (see agenda on pages 1, 6 and 7).

8/23 - 26:

ASMFC American Eel Stock Assessment Workshop, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, 3 Fort Wetherill Road, Jamestown, Rhode Island.

8/29 - 31:

ASMFC American Lobster Stock Assessment Peer Review, Embassy Suites Hotel Boston at Logan Airport, 207 Porter Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

9/9 - 11:

ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Stock Assessment Workshop, Albany Marriott, 189 Wolf Road, Albany, New York.

9/11 - 15:

American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting, Anchorage, Alaska.

9/11 - 17:

International Association Fish & Wildlife Agencies, Nashville, Tennessee.

9/13 - 15:

New England Fishery Management Council, Holiday Inn Express, Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

9/19 - 23:

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Town & Country, 2008 Savannah Highway, Charleston, South Carolina; 800-334-6660.

9/26 - 30:

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, location to be determined.

10/4 - 6:

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Southampton Inn, 91 Hill Street, Southampton, New York.

10/31 - 11/3:

ASMFC 64th Annual Meeting, Marriott Seaview Resort & Spa, 401 S. New York Road, Galloway, New Jersey.

11/15 - 17:

New England Fishery Management Council, Sheraton 4 Points, Hyannis, Massachusetts.

Public comment is a key part of the Commission's fishery management process. We receive stakeholder input through our Advisory Panels, at public hearings, in letters, and by email. It is an invaluable tool, providing our Commissioners greater insight into the needs and desires of their constituencies, and aiding them in making decisions that is in the highest good for both the fishery resource and its users. Commissioners strive to make the best use of the information provided to them. This information takes many forms – scientific, technical, socioeconomic, and political. Commissioners have an obligation to access these diverse inputs and act in the best interest of the resource and their constituency at large.

Yet, there are times when our management boards and individual Commissioners have been criticized for their decisions. This is especially true when Commissioners take action differing from that recommended by the majority of those writing or speaking on the issue. This raises the question, how do Commissioners weigh public input? And, on the flip side, what makes for effective public input? Here are my thoughts on these issues.

Consider when a management board takes action counter to the prevailing public comment. Some feel a Commissioner's role is to count comments or signatures and vote accordingly for those interests. This thinking concludes that to do otherwise means some small group has exercised an improper, and according to some, illegal influence over our Commissioners. In fact, Commissioners have a broader role. Their first obligation is to carry out their trust responsibility for proper stewardship of the public resources under their care. If individual letter writers see liberal bag limits as beneficial to them, but the collective result is overfishing, then Commission action might not (and probably should not) comport with the public's advice. Should we jeopardize the resource to accommodate the majority of those who comment?

Commissioners must also think about the interests of the broad public, including those who do not communicate on every issue. For example, we seldom hear from children about fishery management plans, and they don't come to public hearings or Commission meetings. However, there is a societal expectation that Commissioners will look after their interests by ensuring there are healthy stocks of fish for them, as the next generation, to enjoy. We also know, for a large segment of the public, access to public fisheries resources means going to a store to buy fish, because they don't have the time, means, or access to catch fish on their own. While some

states have decided it is best to reserve certain species for sport fish use only, others have not. So until there is a coastwide policy to assign a species game fish only status, it is reasonable for Commissioners to consider the needs of both the fish-eating and fish-catching public.

Commissioners, like all public officials, also need to evaluate the accuracy of the public's comment and advice. In some cases the public might take a position based on incorrect information or assumptions. They may believe this information with all good intentions, but if key premises are faulty and projected outcomes unlikely or impossible, the advice should be weighed accordingly. During the Striped Bass Amendment 6 process many people spoke against opening the EEZ to striped bass fishing based on the incorrect assumption it would lead to higher commercial landings. In fact, such landings are controlled through specific quotas, and would not be increased by opening the EEZ.

This leads us to the second question posed in this article. What makes for effective public comment? First and foremost, an informed advocate is a powerful advocate. Information on the Commission's processes and activities are widely available through our website or by contacting our office. If there's something you don't understand, call and talk to someone, be they ASMFC staff, your state Commissioners or state technical staff. Consider approaching the issue or process with an open mind; be fully informed before you establish your position on something.

When providing public comment, either written or oral, keep in mind the following points. Be organized. Focus on specific options outlined within a Public Information Document or proposed plan addendum (these describe the range of alternatives available to the Commissioners). Identify your main points and speak concisely. Be clear about what you like and don't like. Offer options if you are against something. And, be respectful and constructive. Many times, one well thought-out and reasoned argument can outweigh 100s of uninformed, emotionally driven postcards or letters.

Please keep those cards and letters coming. Your views are an important contribution to our public process. Public comment frequently moves Commissioners in a general direction away from their initial positions. Keep in mind there are often good reasons why Commissioners' action might not reflect exactly what you wanted. They take their responsibilities seriously and are committed to doing what they perceive as the right thing. Hopefully, that is something we can all agree on.

Species Profile: Weakfish

Persistent Drop in Landings Since Amendment 4 Implementaion Raises Questions & Concerns

Introduction

Amendment 4 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Weakfish was approved in November 2002 in a period of apparent high biomass and low fishing mortality. In the hopes of building upon these positive signs, it established stock assessment benchmarks, such as threshold levels for fishing mortality and spawning stock biomass. Despite changes in management under the Amendment, conditions of the stock and landings appear to have deteriorated.

Life History

Weakfish occur along the Atlantic coast of North America from Nova Scotia, Canada to the East Coast of Florida, but are most common from New York to North Carolina. Warming of coastal waters in the spring prompts an inshore and northerly migration of adults from their offshore wintering grounds to nearshore sounds, bays and estuaries. Spawning occurs shortly after the inshore migration, peaking from late April to June, with some geographic variation in timing. In the fall, an offshore and southerly migration of adults coincides with declining water temperatures. The continental shelf from Chesapeake Bay to Cape Lookout, North Carolina appears to be the major wintering ground for weakfish.

Growth in weakfish is particularly rapid in the first year and they mature at a young age. Most fish will spawn at the end of their first year and all fish are mature by their second year. The size of a weakfish is not a particularly good indicator of age as a 14-inch weakfish can range in age from one to six years old. Size at age one is variable but most fish are ten to eleven inches long. Surveys along the Atlantic coast indicate that estuaries provide feeding areas and spawning grounds for adult weakfish and are equally as important as nursery areas for juveniles. Adult weakfish are often found near the periphery of eelgrass beds, perhaps because weakfish primarily feed on shrimp, other crustaceans, and small fish that are found near these grass beds.

Recreational & Commercial Fisheries

Weakfish have supported fisheries along the Atlantic coast since at least the 1800s, and are sought after by both commercial and recreational fishermen. From 1950 to the late 60s, commercial landings fluctuated without trend, ranging from three to nine million pounds. The early 70s began a period of tremendous growth in the commercial fishery, with landings peaking at 36 million pounds in 1980. The commercial fishery declined steadily throughout the 1980s, dropping to a low of six million pounds in 1994 (Figure 1). Since 1998, landings have continued to drop to a time series low of less than two million pounds. The primary commercial gear for weakfish are trawls and gillnets, although weakfish are also landed using pound nets and haul seines.



Photo courtesy of Ron Redington



Weakfish *Cynoscion regalis*

Common Names: gray trout, squeateague, sea trout, summer trout, tiderunner

Family: Sciaenidae (which also includes red drum, spot and Atlantic croaker)

Largest Recorded: 30", 19lbs, 2 oz., DE Bay, 1989

Oldest Recorded: 17 years

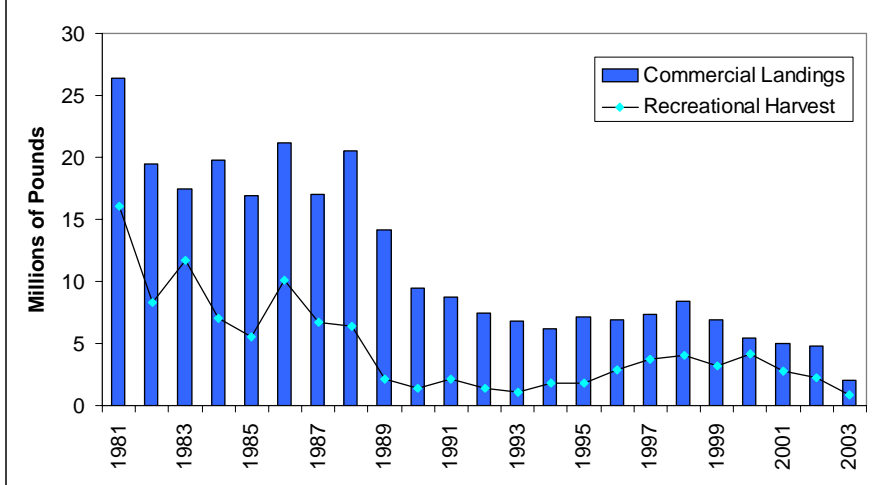
Interesting Fish Facts:
* This fish's name, "weakfish," refers to the tender, easily-torn membrane of the fish's mouth, rather than its fighting ability.
* It is so popular in the Mid-Atlantic that DE named weakfish its state fish in 1981 and the NJ town of Fortescue calls itself the "Weakfish Capital of the World."

Age at Maturity: 90% mature at age 1

Stock Status: Overfished; overfishing is not occurring

Figure 1. Weakfish Recreational Harvest & Commercial Landings

Source: ASMFC Weakfish Stock Assessment Subcommittee, 2005



Recreational landings have followed a similar trend to that of commercial landings, with harvest peaking at 16 million pounds in 1980 and steadily decreasing over the next 10 years to a low of one million pounds. In the early 1990s, recreational landings fluctuated between one and two million pounds. From 1996 through 2002, landings have ranged between two and four million pounds. However, landings in 2003 reached a time series low of less than one million pounds.

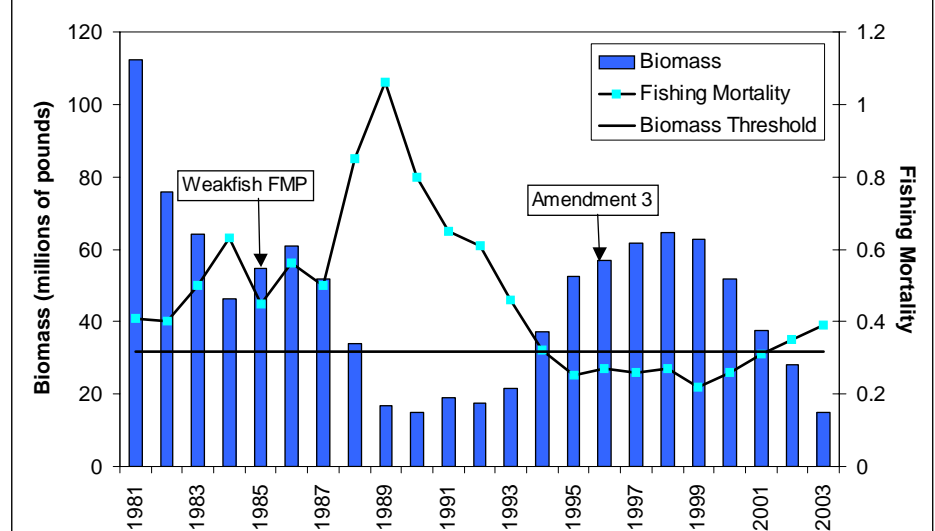
Stock Status

The latest weakfish stock assessment was completed in early 2005. It incorporated new methodologies to help understand why coastwide landings (recreational and commercial combined) have dropped since 1998. Landings in both fisheries decreasing at a similar rate is a strong indication that the stock is declining (Figure 1). This finding was confirmed by the most recent stock assessment. The current biomass level is estimated to be below the threshold established under Amendment 4 (31.8 million pounds). Fishing mortality rate appears to have increased slightly since 1999 (Figure 2). However, it is estimated to be below the Amendment 4 threshold of 0.5.

It is unlikely that harvest pressure alone has caused the decline in stock abundance. It is thought that natural mortality has significantly contributed to the current condition of the weakfish stock. Potential sources of mortality include species interaction (i.e. competition for prey, predation) and low survivability of juveniles, possibly caused by water temperature changes. It is thought that unless weakfish mortality, including natural mortality, lessens, stock recovery may take many years.

Figure 2. Weakfish Biomass and Fishing Mortality, 1981 - 2003

Source: ASMFC Weakfish Stock Assessment Subcommittee, 2005



Atlantic Coast Management Considerations

In 1985, as a result of population declines and limited biological information, the Commission initiated the development of its first Weakfish FMP. The Plan prescribed only two specific management measures: (1) promote the use of trawl efficiency devices in the southern shrimp fishery, and (2) reduce catches of weakfish one year or less in age. While the goals of the plan, as well as its two subsequent amendments, were well intentioned, the states were unable to stop the continued decline of weakfish stocks. It was not until 1996 that the states, armed with the compliance mandates of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, were able to develop and implement a plan (Amendment 3) to recover overfished weakfish stocks. Under this plan, stocks began to rebound as a result of conservative fishing mortality targets.

Amendment 4 was intended to continue the recovery and expand the stock to its historical size, age structures and geographical range. However, the stock has not responded as expected. In response to decreased landings and the most recent stock assessment, draft Addendum I of Amendment 4 is currently under development. Please check the ASMFC website (www.asmfc.org) and future issues of *Fisheries Focus* to stay abreast of upcoming weakfish activities. For more information, please contact Braddock Spear, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or bspear@asmfc.org

ASMFC Summer Meeting Final Agenda (continued from page 1)

- Workshop Review
- Review of Process to Submit Comments
- U.S. Ocean Action Plan Review

4:15 PM – 6:15 PM Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board

- Public Comment
- Addendum XVII (Regional Management and Multi-Year Averaging) – FINAL ACTION
 - Review Public Comment
 - Approve Addendum for Management
- FMP Reviews – FINAL ACTION
 - Summer Flounder Compliance
- Review of Addendum XVI
 - Delayed Implementation Management Measures

Wednesday, August 17, 2005

7:30 AM – 9:00 AM South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board

- Public Comment
- Atlantic Croaker Technical Committee Report
- Review of Draft Atlantic Croaker Amendment 1 for Public Comment – ACTION
- Status of Red Drum Research

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM Winter Flounder Management Board

- Public Comment
- Review and approval of New Jersey's Revised Amendment 1 Implementation Proposal – ACTION
- Technical Committee Recommendations

9:15 AM – 11:15 AM American Eel Management Board

- Public Comment
- Review Public Comment on Public Information Document – ACTION
 - Discuss potential changes to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Eel
- Review and Approval of Stock Assessment Timeline – ACTION
- Update on Federal Eel Status Review and ESA Petition
- Review and approval of Advisory Panel Nominations – ACTION

12:30 PM – 4:00 PM Atlantic Menhaden Management Board

- Public Comment
- Technical Committee Report
- Update on NOAA Menhaden Research
- Review Public Comments from Draft Addendum II
- Advisory Panel Report
- Review and Approval of Draft Addendum II – FINAL ACTION
- FMP Review and State Compliance Reports – FINAL ACTION

4:15 PM – 6:15 PM American Lobster Management Board

- Public Comment
- Area 6 Conservation Equivalency Update
- Review of Draft Addendum VII - ACTION
 - Area 2 Effort Control Plan
- Update on Stock Assessment

Thursday, August 18, 2005

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM Shad and River Herring Management Board

- Public Comment
- Update on the 2005 Stock Assessment

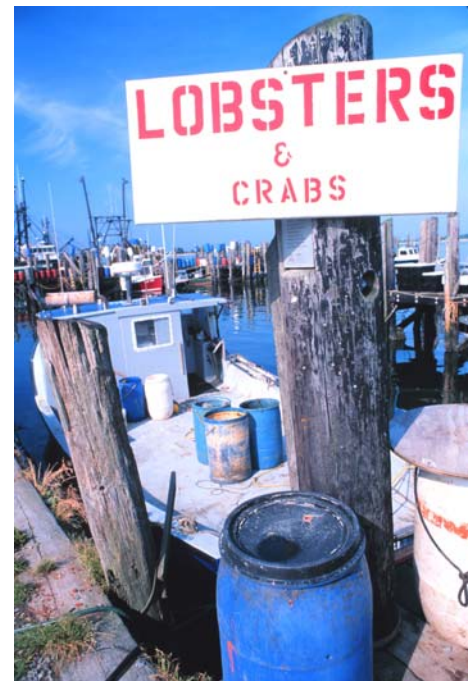
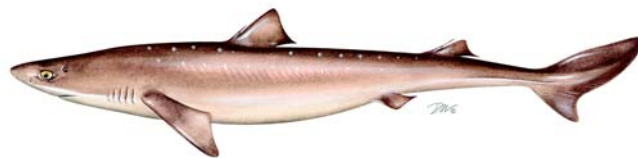


Photo courtesy of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Central Library

- Discussion of a Potential River Herring Stock Assessment
- Discussion of Potential Future Addendum/Amendment Items

9:15 AM – 11:15 AM Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Shark Management Board

- Public Comment
- Review of Draft Addendum I to the Spiny Dogfish FMP: Multi-Year Specification Process – ACTION
 - Update on Mid-Atlantic Council Action
- Presentation by NMFS Highly Migratory Species Division
- Review of Coastal Shark White Paper
- Determine ASMFC Course of Action Regarding Coastal Sharks – ACTION



11:30 AM - 1:00 PM Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board

- Public Comment
- Update on Draft Addendum I for Public Comment – ACTION
 - Technical Committee Review
- Technical Committee Report -- Rhode Island Commercial Quota Proposal – ACTION

1:00 PM - 1:30 PM Buffet Lunch

1:30 PM - 4:30 PM ISFMP Policy Board

- Public Comment
- Discuss White Paper Response to MRAG Report on ASMFC Stock Assessment Development Process
- Update on Non-Native Oyster Activities
- Discussion on Marine Protected Areas
- Update on Additional ACFCMA Spending Plan
- Habitat Committee Report

4:30 PM - 5:00 PM Business Session

- Public Comment
- Review Recommendations of Noncompliance Findings (If Necessary)
- Review and Approval of Fishery Management Plan Amendments (If Necessary)

ASMFC Comings & Goings

Commissioners:

Erling Berg -- This July, Erling Berg joined the Commission as New Jersey's Governor Appointee. Mr. Berg was appointed by the state's Acting Governor Richard J. Codey and replaces Mr. Thomas Fote, who served on the Commission from 2002 to June 2005.



In his new position, Mr. Berg joins New Jersey Commissioners Martin McHugh (often times represented by Bruce Freeman) and Assemblyman Robert Smith (represented by proxy Ed Goldman) as the

state's delegation to the Commission. Mr. Berg comes to us with diverse fisheries expertise. Born in Fedje, Norway, Mr. Berg moved to the U.S. in 1951. Shortly thereafter, he began his lifelong career as a commercial fisherman, fishing out of New Bedford, Massachusetts throughout the 1950s, 60s and 70s, and Cape May, New Jersey in the late 70s/early 80s. He also tried his luck longlining for swordfish on George's Bank, fishing the resource-abundant waters off of Alaska, and clamming out of Provincetown, Massachusetts and Belford, New Jersey. He is one of the founding members and past presidents of the East Coast Fisheries Association. Though his background is in commercial fisheries, Mr. Berg believes that his job as ASMFC Commissioner is "to look out for the interests of the people of New Jersey whether they're recreational or commercial. The key is to listen to all fishermen's concerns."

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ASMFC Comings & Goings (continued from page 7)

Staff:

David Low & Adam Seip -- This July, the Commission says good-bye to its two summer interns, David Low and Adam Seip. Both came to us through the Fund for American Studies and have spent the last two months working on numerous fisheries projects. These have included researching economic incentives used in fisheries management; reviewing and analyzing the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (ACFCMA) and other fisheries legislation; documenting the Commission's progress in fisheries management from the enactment of ACFCMA to today; evaluating the economic and social implications of mutlispecies/ecosystem modeling; and determining the current value of ASMFC-managed species

and their estimated value if stocks were fully recovered. And, while it was not part of their original job description, David and Adam have also been extremely valuable assisting staff compile and summarize the thousands of form letters received as part of the public comment on Draft Addendum II to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden.

David is currently an undergraduate at the University of Virginia, where he is studying Foreign Affairs and Economics. Adam is an undergraduate at Louisiana State University, where he is studying International Studies, with an emphasis on Africa and the Middle East. While



From left: ASMFC Summer Interns, David Low and Adam Seip.

they have two more years to go, they both intend to pursue graduate degrees as well. Their enthusiasm and helpfulness will be greatly missed by the entire staff. We wish them the very best in all their endeavors.

On the Legislative Front

109th Congress, 1st Session

Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization (MSA)

Congressman Tom Allen (D-Maine) introduced House Bill 3278, 'Fishing Quota Standards Act of 2005,' to amend the MSA to establish requirements for fishing quota systems. The bill sets forth general provisions, including allocation of quota shares, termination or limitation of a fishing quota system, and expiration of a quota share no later than seven years after it is issued.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries Service has not yet introduced its MSA reauthorization bill, however, its release is anticipated during this Congress. In early July, Sue Salveson, Assistant Regional Administrator for Sustainable Fisheries, Alaska Regional Office of the National Marine Fisheries Service, provided testimony on fisheries management in Alaska and the reauthorization

of the MSA before the House Fisheries Subcommittee. Ms. Salveson's testimony focused on the successes of the fisheries management experience in Alaska, specifically in the areas of ecosystem approaches to fisheries management, market-based management systems, and the use of best available scientific information, as a model for national fisheries management.

Oceans-21 Bill

In June, House Oceans Caucus Co-Chairs Curt Weldon (R-Pennsylvania), Sam Farr (D-California), Tom Allen (D-Maine), and Jim Saxton (R-New Jersey) introduced House Bill 2939 to establish a national oceans policy. The bill is based on recommendations from the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and Pew Oceans Commission reports. The



bill promotes regional ecosystem-based oceans governance, expands and coordinates programs for ocean science, exploration, and research, and establishes an 'Ocean and Great Lakes Conservation Trust Fund,' among other provisions.

Ocean and Coastal Literacy

Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-New Jersey) recently introduced Senate Bill 1465, 'Ocean and Coastal Literacy in

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On the Legislative Front (continued from page 8)

Urban and other Environments,' to strengthen programs relating to ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes science education and training by providing coordination of efforts, greater interagency cooperation, and the strengthening and expansion of related programs administered by NOAA.

Endangered Species Act

House Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo (R-California) currently has draft legislation making major changes to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) floating around Capitol Hill. Congress passed the ESA in 1973, and while it is a powerful environmental law, it is also one of the most controversial. The major issues addressed in Chairman Pombo's legislation are critical habitat, the level of science used for decision-making, property rights, and a sunset clause. Chairman Pombo has reported that a ten-year sunset on the ESA would force Congress to review changes and reauthorize the Act. In May, Chairman Pombo released a report, "Implementation of the Endangered Species Act of 1973," prepared at his request by the House Resources Committee's Oversight and Investigation staff. The report is available at <http://resourcescommittee.house.gov/issues/more/esa/implementationreport.htm#exec>.

The following legislation has been introduced to amend the ESA:

- House Bill 1299, introduced by Congressman Dennis Cardoza (D-California) on March 15, to reform the process for designating critical habitat under the Act.
- House Bill 1837, introduced by Congressman Jeff Flake (R-Arizona) on April 26, to establish limitations on the designation of critical habitat.
- House Bill 2779, introduced by Congressman Wally Herger (R-California) on June 7, to enable federal agencies responsible for the preservation of threatened and endangered species to rescue and relocate members of any of those species that would be taken in the course of certain reconstruction, maintenance, or repair of federal or non-federal man-made flood control levees.
- House Bill 3110, introduced by Congressman Bobby Jindal (R-Louisiana) on June 29, to provide for treatment of distinct population segments of Eastern oyster as separate species.
- House Bill 3300, introduced by Congressman Sam Graves (R-Missouri) on July 14, to authorize species recovery agreements under which the federal government is obligated to make annual payments or provide other compensation for activities that improve the recovery of one or more species listed under the Act.

August Recess

The House and Senate will not be in session on August 1 through September 5, and will reconvene on September 6.

For more information, please contact Lena Kofas, Executive Assistant, at (202)289-6400 or lkofas@asmfc.org.

Southeast Bycatch Workshop Scheduled for November

The National Marine Fisheries Service Southeast Region has released the details of its Southeast Bycatch Workshop. The Workshop, intended to focus on bycatch issues in the Southeastern U.S. and Caribbean, will be held on November 8 - 10, 2005 at the Hilton, 333 First Street South, St. Petersburg, Florida. The goal of the workshop is to provide a better understanding of bycatch issues, identify potential solutions that can reduce bycatch, and enhance ability to measure bycatch. All interested parties are invited to attend and participate in the Workshop.

The Workshop's first day will consist of a series of presentations to provide an overview of regional bycatch issues and potential solutions. On the second day, attendees will divide into four working groups including science and research, data and monitoring, gear technology, and management. The working groups will address specific questions concerning bycatch, with a moderated discussion led by the panelists in the morning. In the afternoon, the audience will be broken down into smaller working groups. The small work groups will participate in a facilitated discussion to seek solutions to bycatch issues that were identified in the morning. On the last day, all workshop attendees will reconvene as a group for a working group panel report by the moderators. The workshop will also include a reception.

To receive the discounted rate of \$93.00 per night, you must make hotel reservations by October 7, 2005. You may contact the hotel directly at 800-944-5500 or reserve your room online (www.stpetehilton.com). Guests must identify their affiliation with the *National Marine Fisheries Service*.

To register for the workshop or for more information, please contact Mark Godcharles, SERO Outreach Coordinator, at mark.godcharles@noaa.gov (727-551-5727) or Jack McGovern at john.mcgovern@noaa.gov (727-824-5383).



ACCSP Considers Preliminary Proposals for 2006

More partners request funds from shrinking budget

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) has received preliminary proposals for projects to be initiated or continued in 2006 from eleven state and federal partners and four ACCSP committees.

Since 1999, the ACCSP has provided funds to its state and federal partners for data collection projects needed for fishery management. Funding increased from \$1.5 million per year in 1999 to \$3.5 million per year in 2002 and 2003. Since then, funding has diminished due to federal rescissions. In 2005, the ACCSP was able to award less than \$3.45 million.

Partner requests for 2006 already exceed the ACCSP's 2005 budget, so the ACCSP's Operations Committee, Advisory Committee, and Coordinating Council may have to decline some quality proposals due to lack of funds before allocations are finalized later this year.

Ten state partners have requested funds for 2006. They include:

1. **Maine Department of Marine Resources:** a) Portside Bycatch Sampling and Commercial Catch Sampling of Atlantic Herring and Atlantic Mackerel Fisheries (\$104,633) and b) Support for Mandatory Dealer Reporting in Maine (\$94,093).
2. **New Hampshire Fish and Game:** Final Phase in the Implementation of the ACCSP for Lobster Dealers, Coastal Harvesters and Metadata Module in New Hampshire (\$67,781).
3. **Rhode Island Division of Fish and**

Wildlife: Continuation of SAFIS and finfish logbooks in Rhode Island (\$150,365).

4. **New York Department of Environmental Conservation¹:** Continuation and Expansion of New York State Fishery Dependent Data Collection and Continuation and Expansion of New York State Biological Sampling Program (\$200,520).
5. **New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection:** a) A Pilot Program to Develop a Vessel-Based Reporting System for a Small-Boat Fishery, the New Jersey Oyster Fishery (\$67,336); b) Biological Characterization of Eight New Jersey Commercial Fisheries (\$150,430); and c) Continuance of Phase 2 of the ACCSP Program for the State of New Jersey (\$160,239).
6. **Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife:** Initiating State Dealer Reporting in Delaware (\$101,750).
7. **Maryland Department of Natural Resources:** Consolidation of Maryland's Biological Sampling Data for Inclusion in the ACCSP Biological Module (\$88,900).
8. **North Carolina Department of Marine Fisheries:** a) Socioeconomic Analysis of Commercial Fisheries of Core Sound Area, North Carolina – A Longitudinal Follow-Up (\$20,835); b) Conduct of Marine Recreational Fish-

eries Statistics Survey Random Digit Dialing and For-Hire Telephone Calls in North Carolina (\$16,215); c) ACCSP Data Maintenance and Coordination for Fish Dealer Electronic Reporting (\$72,190); and d) Protected Species Bycatch Assessment in Pamlico Sound, North Carolina (\$142,437)².

9. **South Carolina Department of Natural Resources:** Continuation of the ACCSP Commercial Module in South Carolina (\$60,990).
10. **Georgia Department of Natural Resources:** A Cooperative Survey Utilizing Commercial and Recreational Fishers to Evaluate Catch, Effort, Bycatch, and Biological Information in the Georgia Blue Crab Fishery (\$67,763).

The National Marine Fisheries Service submitted four proposals. They include: Electronic Vessel Reporting by Offshore Lobster Fleet (\$72,540); Improving Fishing Vessel Trip Reports for Charter and Headboats in the Atlantic Tuna Fishery (\$73,723); Sample Aging Data Integration with TIP Online (\$96,190); and Observer Coverage of the Southeastern Atlantic Shrimp Fishery (\$335,335).

Four ACCSP committees submitted proposals. The Recreational Technical Committee submitted three, including Reducing Variances for Important Managed Recreational Shore and Private/

¹ This proposal is submitted in partnership with the National Marine Fisheries Service's Northeast Regional Office.

² This proposal is submitted in partnership with the National Marine Fisheries Service's Southeast Regional Office.

ACCSP Considers Preliminary Proposals for 2006 (continued from page 10)

Rental Boat Fisheries (\$655,645), Increase Intercept Sampling Levels for MRFSS For-Hire Methodology of the Charter Boat and Headboat Fishery on the Atlantic Coast (\$645,463), and An Inventory of Tournament Activity Along the Atlantic Coast (\$53,550). The Operations Committee submitted one proposal, External Program Review of the ACCSP (\$28,350). The Biological Review Panel submitted Coordination of Coastwide Biological Sampling to Meet ACCSP Targets (\$915,270), and the Outreach Committee submitted Continuation of RCE-17 and FCE-13 of the Implementation Plan 2004-2008 (\$111,250).

In addition, the Commission was allocated \$1.4M to pay for ACCSP activities and expenses, including salaries, travel, office space, meeting expenses, and operation of the ACCSP data warehouse and SAFIS, under the terms of the administrative support agreement between ACCSP and the Commission.

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, NOAA Fisheries and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. For more information please visit www.accsp.org or call Abbey Compton, ACCSP Outreach Coordinator, at (202) 216-5690.



Managing Our Nation's Fisheries II Conference Proceedings Now Available

The distilled findings of a large national conference on fisheries management have just become available in print and electronically. On March 24-26, 2005, over 600 people attended the 'Managing Our Nation's Fisheries Conference II - Focus on the Future' in Washington D.C. The newly-offered publication captures the essence of conference discussions.

"We believe that the information contained in these proceedings will be extremely useful in informing the Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization process this year, or other national legislation addressing fisheries

management issues," said conference organizer Chris Oliver, Executive Director of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council.

"The conference findings represent the collective wisdom of panel participants, with a diverse range of perspectives from fishermen, scientists, managers, and public interest groups," said Dave Witherell, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council staff member responsible for publishing the proceedings.

The proceedings address:

➤ Developing ecosystem ap-

proaches to fisheries

- Strengthening scientific advice for management
- Establishing criteria for individual fishing quota programs
- Improving fisheries governance
- Defining marine protected areas
- Protecting deep water corals
- Addressing overfishing and stock rebuilding
- Reconciling conflicting statutes

The 283-page 'Proceedings of a Conference on Fisheries Management in the U.S.' is available in PDF format at <http://www.managingfisheries.org>

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