



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

## 2021 Fall Meeting Webinar Summary

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*Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

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2021 Fall Meeting Webinar  
October 18-21, 2021

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### Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

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## **AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 18, 2021)**

### ***Meeting Summary***

The American Lobster Management Board (Board) met to consider four items: the annual data update, an update on the development of Draft Addendum XXVII on Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank resiliency, a progress update on Draft Addendum XXIX on electronic tracking requirements in the federal lobster and Jonah crab fisheries, and next steps for developing a management strategy evaluation (MSE) for the lobster fishery.

The Technical Committee (TC) Chair reviewed updates to American lobster stock indicators, including young-of-year (YOY) settlement indicators, trawl survey indicators, and ventless trap survey indices. This data update process was recommended during the 2020 stock assessment to more closely monitor changes in stock abundance, and will occur annually moving forward. Indicators were updated with data from 2019 and 2020, where possible, as data collection was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The current status of each indicator was determined as negative, neutral, or positive and the results relative to conditions during the 2020 stock assessment are summarized below.

### ***Gulf of Maine***

- Indicators showed some changing conditions since the 2020 stock assessment with slight improvement in YOY conditions, but some signs of declines in trawl survey and ventless trap survey indicators.

### ***Georges Bank***

- Only trawl survey indicators are available for this region. While the surveys were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and have high interannual variability, the available indicators show some early signs of decline.

### ***Southern New England***

- Indicators generally aligned with conditions found in the 2020 stock assessment, including negative conditions inshore and neutral conditions offshore.

Staff provided an update on the development of the Draft Addendum XXVII, which was initiated to proactively increase biological resiliency of the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank (GOM/GBK) stock by considering a trigger mechanism that would automatically implement management measures if the trigger is reached. The Plan Development Team (PDT) provided draft management options for consideration based on analysis and recommendations from the TC as well as guidance from the Board. The TC analysis showed that of the current biological management measures, changes to the minimum and maximum gauge sizes are most likely to have a positive impact on spawning stock biomass. Therefore, the PDT recommendations included management triggers based on an index of recruit abundance that would result in the implementation of changes to the minimum and maximum gauge sizes to increase spawning stock biomass. The PDT also proposed options to consider standardizing some management measures at final approval of the addendum. Following the PDT's recommendation, the Board modified the objective of the addendum to clarify the goals of the action. Specifically, the new objective addresses declining trends in survey abundance indices since 2018, and specifies that the addendum aims to increase the protection of spawning stock biomass. Given the Board's guidance, the PDT will finalize the draft addendum document for the Board's consideration for public comment at the Winter 2022 meeting.

Staff also provided a progress report on the development of Draft Addendum XXIX, which was initiated in August 2021 to consider electronic tracking requirements for federal permit holders in the lobster and Jonah crab fisheries. This proposed action aims to address a critical need for high-resolution spatial and temporal data to characterize effort in the federal lobster and Jonah crab fleet. In particular, these data are needed to address several challenges facing the fisheries, including Atlantic right whale risk reduction efforts, marine spatial planning discussions, and offshore enforcement. While further work is still needed, the PDT has discussed potential specifications and requirements for tracking devices, harvesters, and states that will be necessary to ensure these data needs are met. The Draft Addendum will be considered by the Board for public comment at a standalone Board meeting later in 2021.

The Board discussed next steps for the development of a management strategy evaluation (MSE) for the lobster fishery. Though the Board is still interested in pursuing an MSE in the future, it agreed to prioritize current efforts on Draft Addenda XXVII and XXIX, as well as state-level efforts related to large whale risk reduction and wind energy development. The Board postponed further discussion on the development of an MSE until the Winter 2023 meeting.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [cstarks@asmfc.org](mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

### ***Motions***

No motions made.

## **ATLANTIC HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 18, 2021)**

### ***Meeting Summary***

The Atlantic Herring Management Board met to set the quota periods for the 2022 Area 1A fishery for Atlantic herring. In February 2021, the Board set specifications for the 2021-2023 fishing years for Atlantic herring, including the sub-annual catch limit (sub-ACL) for the 2022 Area 1A fishery of 1,184 metric tons. Per Amendment 3 to the Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan, quota periods shall be determined annually for Area 1A. The Board can consider distributing the Area 1A sub-ACL using bi-monthly, trimester, or seasonal quota periods. The Board can also decide whether quota from January through May will be allocated later in the fishing season, and underages may be rolled from one period to the next within the same year. For the Area 1A 2022 fishing year, the Board adopted a seasonal quota approach with 72.8% available June-September, and 27.2% available October-December with underages from June through September rolled into the October through December period, if applicable.

The Board also discussed the postponed Draft Addendum III. In May 2020, the Board postponed final action on Draft Addendum III, which was initiated to consider new approaches for managing the Area 1A fishery under low quotas. This action was in response to the challenges encountered in managing the reduced sub-ACL based on the 2018 benchmark stock assessment, which highlighted declining trends in recruitment and spawning stock biomass. Draft Addendum III also considers expanding landing provisions across different permit categories within the days out program. Public comment on the Draft Addendum was received in February and March 2020 with four public hearings held in three states (Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts). In May 2020, the Board postponed final action on

Addendum III until a final rule for the Council's Amendment 8 has been published and until the Council and Commission leadership conduct discussions on coordination of Atlantic herring management. To the first issue, NOAA Fisheries published the final rule on Amendment 8 in January 2021. To the second issue, Commission leadership indicated that coordination discussions between the Commission and Council are ongoing and a white paper may be developed based on the discussions. Further updates on this coordination effort will be provided at future Board meetings.

Finally, the State of Maine noted a potential loss of funding for the Maine Department of Marine Resources' Atlantic herring portside sampling in future years and the need to discuss funding impacts and sampling resources moving forward.

For more information, please contact Emilie Franke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [EFranke@asmfc.org](mailto:EFranke@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

### ***Motions***

**Move to allocate the 2022 Area 1A sub-ACL seasonally with 72.8% available from June through September and 27.2% allocated from October through December. The fishery will close when 92% of the seasonal period's quota has been projected to be harvested and underages from June through September shall be rolled into the October through December period.**

Motion made by Ms. Ware and seconded by Mr. White. Motion is approved by consensus.

### **TAUTOG MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 18, 2021)**

#### ***Press Release***

#### **Tautog Regional Assessments Update Show Improvements in Stock Status**

Arlington, VA – The Commission's Tautog Management Board reviewed the results of 2021 Regional Stock Assessments Update, which found improvements in most regions. Stocks within the Long Island Sound (LIS) and Delaware/ Maryland/Virginia (DelMarVa) regions are not overfished, with improved stock status for both regions from the last assessment in 2017. For LIS, New Jersey/New York Bight (NJ-NYB), and DelMarVa, fishing mortality also decreased with the stock not experiencing overfishing in any regions; also an improvement from the previous assessment. In the Massachusetts and Rhode Island (MARI) region, stock status remains unchanged with the stock not overfished nor experiencing overfishing.

Each regional assessment used information through 2020, including calibrated recreational data from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). Over 90% of the total harvest of tautog across all regions comes from the recreational fishery. In addition to regional indices of abundance from fishery-independent surveys, a catch per unit effort index was developed using MRIP data for each region because tautog are not easily sampled by standard fishery-independent surveys. The new MRIP estimates resulted in higher estimates of spawning stock biomass (SSB) and recruitment in all regions, but had less of an impact on fishing mortality.

### Tautog Stock Status and Reference Points by Region

Stock Region	Spawning Stock Biomass (in millions of pounds)			Fishing Mortality			Stock Status
	Target	Threshold	2020 Estimate	Target	Threshold	3-year Average	
<b>MARI</b>	10.09	7.57	14.90	0.28	0.49	0.23	Not overfished; overfishing not occurring
<b>LIS</b>	14.83	11.12	14.70	0.26	0.38	0.30	Not overfished; overfishing not occurring
<b>NJ-NYB</b>	14.45	10.78	10.54	0.19	0.30	0.26	Overfished; overfishing not occurring
<b>DelMarVa</b>	9.90	7.40	9.66	0.17	0.27	0.06	Not overfished; overfishing not occurring

The regional assessments for MARI and LIS indicated strong year classes in recent years have contributed to increasing trends in SSB. In the DelMarVa region, landings and fishing mortality have declined significantly since 2012, resulting in an increase in SSB over the time period. While the NJ-NYB region remains overfished, the SSB has been trending upward since the last assessment update.

Since no regions are experiencing overfishing, the Board chose to not make any management changes at this time. A more detailed overview of the tautog regional stock assessment update is available on the Commission website at

[http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/61705d532021TautogAssessmentOverview\\_Oct2021.pdf](http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/61705d532021TautogAssessmentOverview_Oct2021.pdf). It was developed to aid media and interested stakeholders in better understanding the results. The assessment update will be available on the Commission website on the tautog webpage the week of October 25th.

For more information on the stock assessments, please contact Katie Drew, Stock Assessment Team Lead, at [kdrew@asmfc.org](mailto:kdrew@asmfc.org); and for more information on tautog management, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior FMP Coordinator, at [krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org).

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### **Motions**

No motions made.

### **ATLANTIC LARGE WHALE TAKE REDUCTION TEAM UPDATE (OCTOBER 18, 2021)**

#### **Meeting Summary**

NOAA Fisheries provided an overview of North Atlantic right whale mortalities and gear interactions by fishery and gear type along the Atlantic coast. It also updated the states on the efforts of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team to develop recommendations to modify the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP) to reduce risk to North Atlantic right whales. NOAA is implementing the ALWTRP changes in two phases.

Phase 1 focuses on the Northeast American lobster and Jonah crab trap fisheries, and has undergone final rulemaking. Specific measures include additional restricted areas, reducing line strength, and improving gear identification. Full implementation of these measures have been stalled given a recent court ruling prohibiting the enforcement of the Lobster Conservation Management Area 1 (inshore Gulf of Maine) Restricted Area for North Atlantic right whales and other large whales. NOAA Fisheries is considering its response to the court ruling, which may include re-evaluating the use of other measures to reduce the risk of entanglements and mortality.

Phase 2 focuses on a number of additional fisheries, including gillnets on a coastwide basis and Atlantic mixed species trap/pot fisheries. The Take Reduction Team is scheduled to meet in early 2022 to discuss possible measures and scoping results. The Team will meet again in Spring 2022 to develop recommended measures for the proposed rule; an additional round of public comment will be solicited following release of the proposed rule. The video recording of this session can be found [here](#).

For more information, please contact Marisa Trego with NOAA Fisheries at [marisa.trego@noaa.gov](mailto:marisa.trego@noaa.gov) or visit the ALWTRP webpage at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/marine-mammal-protection/atlantic-large-whale-take-reduction-plan>.

## **SHAD AND RIVER HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 19, 2021)**

### ***Meeting Summary***

The Shad and River Herring Management Board met to consider updates to American shad habitat plans, progress on two Technical Committee (TC) tasks, an update from U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) Eastern Ecological Science Center on Alosine Science in Support of Interstate Management, and the election of a Vice-chair to the Board.

The Board considered updates to the American shad habitat plans for the District of Columbia and Virginia, as well as a new habitat plan from New York covering the Hudson River. Under Amendment 3 to the FMP, all states and jurisdictions are required to develop habitat plans that include information on habitat threats and restoration programs affecting American shad. Most habitat plans were originally approved in 2014 and were intended to be updated every five years but there were significant delays in the development of New York's plan. The Board approved the presented shad habitat plans, and will review remaining updates at its next meeting.

The TC Chair reported the results of the TC's work on the Board task to develop methods to evaluate catch of American shad in mixed-stock fisheries in state waters. After collecting available data from all states and jurisdictions pertaining to mixed-stock fisheries and bycatch, the TC recommended potential methods to assess the impacts of mixed-stock fisheries on out-of-basin stocks. The TC recommended developing management strategies to reduce impacts of out-of-basin harvest using an index of relative fishing mortality. This would require an increase in genetic sampling and/or tagging efforts to evaluate annual stock composition of mixed stock landings. The TC felt that the minor increase in sampling could easily be achieved and could provide a meaningful increase in assessment quality. Consistent with the TC's advice, the Board recommended that these methods be incorporated into the Delaware River Basin Coop Sustainable Fishery Management Plan to evaluate the mixed-stock American shad fishery in the Delaware Bay.

The TC Chair also provided a progress update on the TC task from May 2021 to prioritize systems with barriers to passage for shad recovery and develop an inventory of available data that would support the development of fish passage criteria. To date, the TC has identified Federal Energy Regulatory Commission hydropower projects that are a priority for shad recovery efforts, and is investigating what data are available that could be used to develop passage performance standards for these systems. The TC expects to deliver a final report on this task to the Board at its next meeting.

The Board received a presentation on alosine science being carried out at the USGS Eastern Ecological Science Center (EESC). The EESC is conducting over 20 research projects in support of ASMFC-managed species, and three of those are focused on shad and river herring. These projects include genetic stock identification and tissue repository, applied research on innovative fish passage technologies, and disease research, and will provide important information to aid in shad and river herring stock assessment and management.

Lynn Fegley of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources was also elected as Vice Chair of the Management Board. For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [cstarks@asmfc.org](mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

### ***Motions***

**Move to approve the Shad Habitat Plans from VA, DC, and NY as presented today.**

Motion made by Mr. Geer and seconded by Dr. Rhodes. Motion passed by unanimous consent.

**Move to approve the Technical Committee recommendation to evaluate mixed-stock catch of American shad be incorporated into the Delaware River Basin Coop Sustainable Fishery Management Plan.**

Motion made by Mr. Maniscalco and seconded by Dr. Colden. Motion carries (16 in favor, 2 opposed).

**Move to nominate Lynn Fegley as Vice Chair.**

Motion made by Mr. Hyatt and seconded by Dr. Armstrong. Motion carries without opposition.

### **ATLANTIC COASTAL COOPERATIVE STATISTICS PROGRAM (ACCSP) COORDINATING COUNCIL (OCTOBER 19, 2021)**

#### ***Meeting Summary***

The ACCSP Coordinating Council met to take action on the administrative proposal and ranked Partner proposals to allocate funding for FY2021. The Council approved funding of the top 7 maintenance proposals and 3 new FY2021 proposals as ranked by the Advisory and Operations Committees. The Council discussed the need to find new approaches to support biological sampling of herring, mackerel, and menhaden. Several members supported the transparency and robust process of project ranking discussions. The Council continued to balance increases in the ACCSP administrative grant and tradeoffs for funding across the areas of Partner projects and program priorities. The Leadership Team will meet in December to evaluate 2022 funds to support the approved projects and timing of hiring a software staff member.

For more information, please contact Geoff White, ACCSP Director, at [geoff.white@accsp.org](mailto:geoff.white@accsp.org).



### ***Motions***

**Move to support the updated ACCSP administrative proposal, the top 7 maintenance proposals, and the remaining 3 new proposals as ranked by the Operations and Advisory Committees. The leadership team will be engaged to adjust the funding levels when known.**

Motion made by Dr. McNamee and seconded by Ms. Fegley. Motion stands approved.

## **ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 19, 2021)**

### ***Meeting Summary***

The Atlantic Menhaden Management Board met to outline priorities in completing the next benchmark stock assessment, provide guidance to the Plan Development Team (PDT) to further develop Draft Addendum I to Amendment 3, and discuss fish kills over the past year.

Earlier this year, the Board tasked the Technical Committee (TC) and Ecological Reference Point Work Group (ERP WG) with identifying data needs and timelines for the development of spatially-explicit modeling approaches for menhaden. The TC and ERP WG produced a memo on potential spatially-explicit approaches, which highlighted that any of the approaches would likely extend the timeline for completing the next benchmark assessment, currently scheduled for 2025. The Board indicated completing the benchmark stock assessment in 2025 as planned was the highest priority. The TC and ERP WG will begin work on the single-species and ERP benchmark assessments following completion of the 2022 single-species stock assessment update. The benchmark assessments will focus on refining the ERP approach developed in the 2019 assessments. While some spatial considerations may be incorporated in the process of refining the ERP models, spatial modeling will not be pursued until the 2025 benchmark assessments are completed.

The Board was presented a progress update on development of Draft Addendum I to Amendment 3. The Draft Addendum proposes changes to three management topics: commercial allocations, incidental catch provision, and Episodic Event Set-Aside program (EESA). The PDT provided the Board with a memo that included a statement of the problem, objective, initial set of management alternatives, and PDT recommendations for each topic. The PDT also highlighted key questions to the Board to help guide developing the Draft Addendum further. The three topics are interconnected. For example, changes to allocation can affect incidental landings as well as the states' need to participate in the EESA program. This has created additional complexity in the draft alternatives. The following highlights some of the Board's key feedback:

### ***Allocation***

- For the statement of the problem and objective, adjust language to reflect all current fisheries, not just directed fisheries
- Remove uniform fixed minimum allocation, pooled quota, and open fishery management alternatives from the draft addendum
- Further develop the tiered fixed minimum allocation alternatives, including a lower fixed minimum value (i.e. 0.01%) and include both two and three tiered options
- For timeframes to allocate the remaining TAC, include both a long time series (2009-2020) option and as well as a range of weighted allocation options using weightings of both 50/50 and 25/75 in terms of earlier/recent landings

### **Incidental Catch**

- For the objective, adjust the language to clarify when landings should count against the directed fishery and highlight reducing discard mortality for all fisheries. Additionally, remove the management objective #4, establishing trip and seasons.
- Maintain alternatives that adjust the incidental catch trip limit but have them only apply to non-directed gear
- Keep the catch accounting sub-topic in the addendum, remove sub-alternatives that are gear specific, and add an alternative that evaluates incidental catch as part of total landings relative to the TAC with an overage payback provision

### **EESA**

- Develop alternatives that include 5% as a maximum value to increase the EESA
- The increase in the EESA should come from either the initial TAC or adjustments to the fixed minimum allocation, not relinquished quota
- Remove the alternative that would eliminate the EESA program
- Develop an alternative that allows states to transfer quota into the EESA program prior to an overage of the EESA
- Further develop an alternative that considers allowing a state to begin harvesting under the EESA before the state quota is exhausted (i.e. 95% of a state's quota is met, rather than 100%)

The PDT will continue work on the Draft Addendum with the aim of providing the document to the Board to approve it for public comment at the Commission's Winter Meeting in January 2022.

Due to the meeting running late, the Board postponed reviewing the report on menhaden mortality events until the Winter Meeting. For more information contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator at [krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org).

### ***Motions***

No motions made.

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (OCTOBER 20, 2021)**

#### ***Meeting Summary***

The Executive Committee (Committee) met to discuss several issues, including the FY21 Audit; public information request policy; wind energy involvement; the Seafood Processors Pandemic Response and Safety Block Grant Program, the Commission's Appeals Process; and receive an update on future annual meetings. The following action items resulted from the Committee's discussions:

- The FY21 Audit was reviewed by the Administrative Oversight Committee (AOC) and forwarded to the Executive Committee with a recommendation for approval. The motion to approve passed unanimously.
- Mr. Beal presented the draft policy on responding to public information requests, which was drafted in consultation with the Commission's attorney. After a thorough discussion, Mr. Beal

was directed to incorporate aspects of the discussion and bring it back to the Committee for action at the January meeting.

- Mr. Cimino requested discussion on the Commission's role in coordinating the member states' efforts with regard to offshore wind energy development. While the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management has the lead in wind energy development, Mr. Cimino believes there needs to be coordination among the Atlantic coast states so they speak with a unified voice. A robust discussion ensued, and Chair Keliher noted further discussion needs to take place at the January meeting to determine the appropriate role for the Commission.
- The Committee discussed the Seafood Processors Pandemic Response and Safety Block Grant Program under the Department of Agriculture. Several states felt the amount available to them was not enough for the amount of work administering it would take; other states indicated they were interested but had questions. Mr. Beal will reach out to the Department of Agriculture to request a meeting to discuss this program with the states who are interested. State applications are due November 22.
- The Committee discussed the revised Appeals Process and agreed with the recommended changes to the process; however, several Committee members said the allocation issue must remain as an issue that can be the subject to an appeal. Mr. Beal agreed there is a bit more work to do on the Appeals Process, and will bring a revised document to the Committee meeting in January.
- The future annual meeting schedule is :
  - New Jersey – 2022
  - North Carolina – 2023
  - Maryland – 2024

The Committee also agreed to hold the 2022 Winter Meeting as a hybrid meeting in Arlington, VA. The specific participation details will developed over the next couple of months. For more information, please contact Laura Leach, Director of Finance & Administration, at [lleach@asmfc.org](mailto:lleach@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

### ***Motions***

**On behalf of the Administrative Oversight Committee, move acceptance of the FY21 Audit.**

Motion by Spud Woodward on behalf of the AOC. Motion passed unanimously.

## **COASTAL SHARKS MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 20, 2021)**

### ***Meeting Summary***

The Coastal Sharks Management Board met to set 2022 specifications and elect a new Vice-Chair. Regarding specifications, NOAA Fisheries published the proposed 2022 Atlantic shark specifications in early August. The proposed rule includes a start date of January 1 for all shark management groups, with quota levels remaining unchanged from 2020 and 2021. NOAA Fisheries proposes an increase in the initial 2022 possession limit for the aggregate large coastal sharks (LCS) other than sandbar from 36 to 55 sharks per vessel per trip. This change is due to landings being well below the quota in recent

years. NOAA Fisheries may reduce the retention limit as needed to ensure the quota is not exceeded. The proposed initial retention limit for blacknose sharks is 8 sharks per vessel trip. Taking into consideration the proposed rule, the Board will set the 2022 coastal shark specifications via an email vote after the final rule is published.

Last, the Board elected Erika Burgess of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as the Coastal Sharks Board Vice-Chair. For more information contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator at [krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org). 703.842.0740.

### ***Motions***

**Move to approve the 2022 coastal sharks specifications via an email vote after NOAA Fisheries publishes the final rule for the 2022 Atlantic shark commercial fishing season.**

Motion made by Ms. Burgess and seconded by Mr. Haymans. Motion passes by unanimous approval.

**Move to nominate Erika Burgess (FL) to serve as Vice-Chair to the Coastal Sharks Board.**

Motion made by Mr. Woodward and seconded by Mr. Miller. Motion passes unanimously.

### **BUSINESS SESSION (OCTOBER 20, 2021)**

#### ***Press Release***

#### **Spud Woodward Elected ASMFC Chair**

Arlington, VA – Today, member states of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) thanked Patrick C. Keliher of Maine for an effective two-year term as Chair and elected Commissioner Spud Woodward of Georgia to succeed him.

“I’m honored to be chosen by my fellow Commissioners to lead our efforts for the next two years, during which I hope we’ll once again be meeting in person. I look forward to concluding our introspective examination of *de minimis* status and conservation equivalency so we’re confident that we have the proper balance between flexibility and accountability. Allocation will remain one of our most contentious and potentially divisive tasks. However, I know the spirit of cooperation and mutual respect that’s the legacy of the Commission will lead us to decisions that are as fair and equitable as possible,” said Mr. Woodward.



Mr. Woodward continued, “I want to thank outgoing Chair, Pat Keliher for his steady hand on the tiller during a tumultuous two years, when he faced challenges unlike those of any of his predecessors. Newly elected Vice-chair Joseph Cimino and I will strive to emulate his success working with our stakeholders, state, federal, and academic partners, Congress, and especially Bob Beal and the outstanding staff to ensure *Cooperative and Sustainable Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries* is not just a vision statement but a reality.”

Under Mr. Keliher's chairmanship, the Commission made important strides in furthering its strategic goals. Management accomplishments over the past two years include quick action by the states to end overfishing of Atlantic striped bass; implementation of ecological reference points to manage Atlantic menhaden; positive stock status for all four tautog populations after years of effort to rebuild the stocks; a new rebuilding amendment for bluefish; and the completion of benchmark stock assessments for American lobster, American shad, Atlantic cobia, and tautog. Further, advances in habitat conservation were made by the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP) through its funding of seven on-the-ground projects, which will open over 40 river miles and conserve over 300 acres of fish habitat. ACFHP also partnered with the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership and The Nature Conservancy to spatially prioritize fish habitat conservation sites through GIS mapping and analyses for the Atlantic region of the U.S. from Maine to Florida.

From a data collection and management perspective, the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program also made progress under Mr. Keliher's leadership. The Program redesigned SAFIS eTRIPS, the first and currently only fisherman trip reporting application that meets One Stop Reporting initiative; and implemented state conduct of the Marine Recreational Information Program's (MRIP) For-Hire Survey and electronic data collection for MRIP's Access Point Angler Intercept Survey.

The majority of Mr. Keliher's chairmanship occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, a time in which his leadership truly shined. He maintained active communication with staff and fellow Commissioners, oversaw a seamless transition to virtual meetings, and consistently made decisions with the safety of Commissioners and staff in mind.

A native Georgian, Mr. Woodward has dedicated his life to marine fisheries management at the state and interstate levels. Now retired and serving as Georgia's Governor Appointee to the Commission, Mr. Woodward worked for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA DNR) for over 34 years, including serving as the Director of the Coastal Resources Division and Assistant Director for Marine Fisheries. In addition to his work with GA DNR and the Commission, Mr. Woodward has served on the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council since 2018. In the Commission's 80-year history, Mr. Woodward holds the distinction of being the second Governor's Appointee to serve as Commission Chair and Vice-chair. The first being Captain David H. Hart.

The Commission also elected Joseph Cimino, Marine Fisheries Administrator for the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, as its Vice-Chair.

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PR21-26

### ***Meeting Summary***

The Commission, during its Business Session, considered approval of the 2022 Action Plan and election of new Commission leadership. The Commission reviewed and approved the 2022 Action Plan, which outlines the administrative and programmatic activities for next year. The Plan will be available on the Commission's website, [www.asmfmc.org](http://www.asmfmc.org), under Guiding Documents early next week. By unanimous acclamation, the Commission elected A.G. Spud Woodward of Georgia and Joseph Cimino of New Jersey as Commission Chair and Vice-chair, respectively.

For more information, please contact Robert Beal, Executive Director, at [rbeal@asmfc.org](mailto:rbeal@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

### ***Motions***

**On behalf of the Administrative Oversight Committee, move to approve the 2022 ASMFC Action Plan as modified today.**

Motion made by Mr. Woodward. Motion passes.

**On behalf of the Nominations Committee, move to nominate Mr. Woodward as Chair of ASMFC.**

Motion made by Mr. Gilmore. Motion passes.

**On behalf of the Nominations Committee, move to nominate Mr. Cimino as Vice-Chair of ASMFC.**

Motion made by Mr. Gilmore. Motion passes.

### **ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 20, 2021)**

#### ***Meeting Summary***

The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board (Board) met to consider approval of Draft Amendment 7 for public comment and to consider approval of Draft Addendum VII to Amendment 6 for public comment.

The Board received an overview presentation of the management options developed for Draft Amendment 7. The Plan Development Team (PDT) and the Technical Committee (TC) met multiple times between May and September to develop Draft Amendment 7. The Advisory Panel (AP) also met to provide feedback on the scope of draft options, which was included in the staff presentation. In August 2020, the Board initiated development of Amendment 7 to the Atlantic Striped Bass Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to update the management program to better align with current fishery needs and priorities, and build upon the Addendum VI action to end overfishing and initiate rebuilding. Since Amendment 6 was adopted in 2003, the status and understanding of the striped bass stock and fishery has changed considerably. The 2018 benchmark stock assessment indicated the striped bass stock has been overfished since 2013 and is experiencing overfishing, which changed perception of stock status. In May 2021, the Board approved the following four issues for development in Draft Amendment 7: management triggers, measures to protect the 2015 year class, recreational release mortality, and conservation equivalency.

The Board discussed the proposed management options for each of the four issues and removed some options from the document, primarily due to concerns that certain options would not be viable for implementation. For management triggers Tier 1 (fishing mortality triggers), the Board removed draft options A3, C2, and C4. For management triggers Tier 2 (female spawning stock biomass triggers), the Board removed draft options C2 and C4. For measures to protect the 2015 year class, the Board removed draft option E (recreational harvest moratorium). For recreational release mortality, the Board removed draft options B1 and B2 for seasonal closures, and draft options C2, C3, and C4 for gear restrictions. For conservation equivalency, the Board removed draft option F (prohibition of CE).

The Board tasked the PDT with development of new options to add to the Draft Amendment 7 for the Board's review at the 2022 Winter Meeting. For the fishing mortality ( $F$ ) threshold management trigger, the Board added a draft option to consider a 2-year average of  $F$  in addition to a 3-year average. The Board tasked the PDT with developing a formal rebuilding plan for striped bass that could include a status quo  $F$  target and another option that would establish a  $F(\text{rebuild})$  calculated as the  $F$  value projected to achieve SSB(rebuild) no later than 2029 under the assumption of the low recruitment regime. The Board also tasked the PDT with adding maximum size limit/slot options to the Chesapeake Bay recreational fishery measures section for protecting the 2015, 2017, and 2018 year classes.

The Board received an overview presentation of the management options developed for Draft Addendum VII to Amendment 6. The presentation included a report from the PDT regarding concerns about commercial quota transfers. The issue of commercial quota allocation was not approved for development in Draft Amendment 7. In order to provide a management option that could provide some immediate relief to states that were seeking a change in commercial quota allocation, the Board initiated Draft Addendum VII in August 2021 to consider allowing voluntary transfers of coastal commercial quota. Due to the PDT's concerns and the Board's current focus on Draft Amendment 7, the Board deferred consideration of Draft Addendum VII until May 2022 to allow for further development and review of the transfer options.

For more information, please contact Emilie Franke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [efranke@asmfc.org](mailto:efranke@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

### ***Motions***

**Move to consider a formal rebuilding plan for striped bass in Amendment 7 using methods described under "Management Response to Recruitment Trigger". Option 1 would be status quo  $F$  target. Option 2 would establish a  $F(\text{rebuild})$  calculated as the  $F$  value projected to achieve SSB(rebuild) by 2029 under the assumption of the lower recruitment regime.**

Motion made by Ms. Ware and seconded by Mr. McMurray. Motion tabled until the end of the Draft Amendment 7 agenda item.

### **Motion to Table #1**

**Motion to table until the end of the Draft Amendment 7 agenda item.**

Motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Gary. Motion adopted by consensus.

**Move to add protection for the 2015, 2017, and 2018 year classes through adding a maximum size limit option/slot option in the Chesapeake Bay recreational fishery in section 4.2.1. Maximum size limit options developed by the PDT should aim to maximize protection for the 2015, 2017 and 2018 year classes consistent with the Technical Committee advice for the coastal analysis.**

Motion made by Mr. Sikorski and seconded by Mr. Armstrong. Motion tabled until the end of the Draft Amendment 7 agenda item.

### **Motion to Table #2**

**Move to table until the end of the Amendment 7 agenda item.**

Motion made by Mr. Nowalsky and seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion passes.



#### **Main Motion**

**Move to defer consideration by the Striped Bass Board of Draft Addendum VII to Amendment 6 to the Atlantic Striped Bass Plan to allow further development and review of the transfer options.**

Motion made by Mr. Miller and seconded by Mr. Gary.

#### **Motion to Substitute**

**Move to substitute to postpone Draft Addendum VII to Amendment VI until such time as striped bass is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.**

Motion made by Ms. Patterson and seconded by Mr. Fote. Motion fails (2 in favor, 14 opposed).

#### **Main Motion**

**Move to defer until May 2022 consideration by the Striped Bass Board of Draft Addendum VII to Amendment 6 to the Atlantic Striped Bass Plan to allow further development and review of the transfer options.**

Motion made by Mr. Miller and seconded by Mr. Gary. Motion approved without objection.

**Move to remove Option F from the conservation equivalency options.**

Motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Mr. Luisi. Motion passes (10 in favor, 4 opposed, 2 abstentions).

#### **Tabled Motion #1**

**Move to task the PDT to develop a formal rebuilding plan for striped bass in Amendment 7 using methods described under “Management Response to Recruitment Trigger”. Options could include a status quo F-target and another option that would establish a F(rebuild) calculated as the F value projected to achieve SSB(rebuild) no later than 2029 under the assumption of the lower recruitment regime.**

Motion made by Ms. Ware and seconded by Mr. McMurray. Motion approved without objection.

#### **Tabled Motion #2**

**Move to add protection for the 2015, 2017, and 2018 year classes through adding a maximum size limit option/slot option in the Chesapeake Bay recreational fishery in section 4.2.1. Maximum size limit options developed by the PDT should aim to maximize protection for the 2015, 2017 and 2018 year classes consistent with the Technical Committee advice for the coastal analysis.**

Motion made by Mr. Sikorski and seconded by Mr. Armstrong. Motion stands approved without objection.

### **HORSESHOE CRAB MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 21, 2021)**

#### ***Press Release***

#### **ASMFC Horseshoe Crab Board Sets 2022 Specifications for Horseshoe Crabs of Delaware Bay Origin**

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved the harvest specifications for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin under the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework. The Board established a harvest limit of 500,000 Delaware Bay



male horseshoe crabs and zero female horseshoe crabs for the 2022 season based on the harvest package recommended by the Delaware Bay Ecosystem Technical Committee and ARM Subcommittee. Per the allocation mechanism established in Addendum VII, the following quotas were set for the States of New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland and the Commonwealth of Virginia, which harvest horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin:

	2022 Delaware Bay Origin Horseshoe Crab Quota (no. of crabs)	2022 Total Quota*
State	Male Only	Male Only
Delaware	162,136	162,136
New Jersey**	162,136	162,136
Maryland	141,112	255,980
Virginia***	34,615	81,331

\* Total male quotas includes crabs which are not of Delaware Bay origin.

\*\* New Jersey has maintained a harvest moratorium for horseshoe crabs since 2008.

\*\*\* Virginia harvest refers to harvest east of the COLREGS line only.

The ARM Framework, established through Addendum VII, incorporates both shorebird and horseshoe crab abundance levels to set optimized harvest levels for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin. The horseshoe crab abundance estimate was based on data from the Benthic Trawl Survey conducted by Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Virginia Tech). This survey, which is the primary data source for assessing Delaware Bay horseshoe crab abundance, does not have a consistent funding source. Members of the Delaware and New Jersey U.S. Congressional Delegations, with the support of NOAA Fisheries, have provided annual funding for the survey since 2016.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [cstarks@asmfc.org](mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

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PR21-27

### **Meeting Summary**

In addition to setting 2022 harvest specifications for the Delaware Bay, the Board considered a progress update on the ongoing revisions of the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework. In 2019, the Board directed the ARM Subcommittee to begin working on updates to the Framework to revisit several aspects of the ARM model and incorporate the most current scientific information available for horseshoe crabs and red knots. Over the past year, the ARM Subcommittee has been working to incorporate the Catch Multiple Survey Analysis model into the ARM, move the model to a new software platform, improve model structure, and update the red knot population model. The Draft Report on the ARM Revision will be reviewed by the Delaware Bay Ecosystem Technical Committee later this month. The Revision is tentatively scheduled to go to peer review November 16-18, 2021 and will be brought to the Board for its consideration at the Winter 2022 meeting.

The Board also reviewed state compliance and the Fishery Management Plan Review of the 2020 fishing year. All states and jurisdictions' regulations were found to be consistent with the FMP and *de minimis* requests were granted to South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Although it is not currently a biological concern, the Board noted biomedical mortality has exceeded the FMP threshold of 57,000 crabs in recent years. The Board tasked the Plan Development Team to review biomedical mortality, discuss biologically-based options for setting the threshold, and consider updates to best management

practices for handling biomedical collections. The Board also highlighted the need to better understand discard mortality rates for horseshoe crabs.

Finally, the Board elected John Clark of the Delaware Department of Natural Resources as Vice-chair of the Horseshoe Crab Management Board. For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [cstarks@asmfc.org](mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

### ***Motions***

#### **Move to select harvest package 3 (500,000 male-only crabs) for 2022 horseshoe crab bait harvest in Delaware Bay.**

Motion made by Mr. Luisi and seconded by Mr. Geer. Motion approved by consent.

### **SPINY DOGFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 21, 2021)**

#### ***Meeting Summary***

The Spiny Dogfish Management Board met to consider analysis on the commercial trip limit and whether to adjust specifications for 2022/2023 fishing year; the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Review for the 2020 fishing year; and receive an update on the 2022 research track stock assessment.

Earlier in the month the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) was presented with analysis on the impact of the federal trip limit on market price. While price per pound has varied between \$.20-\$.25 over the past five years, the federal trip limit has remained constant at 6,000 pounds. The price range was similar even when the trip limit increased from 3,000 pounds in 2013 to 6,000 pounds in 2016. Based on input from its Advisory Panel upon reviewing the analysis, the MAFMC recommended to NOAA Fisheries that it increase the federal trip limit to 7,500 pounds for the 2022/2023 fishing year. The New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) will be considering whether to recommend adjusting the trip limit at its next meeting in December. The Board discussed whether to adjust the trip limit in state waters for the northern region states (Maine through Connecticut) to be consistent with the potential measures in federal water. There is uncertainty on whether NEFMC would recommend the same trip limit level as the MAFMC. Taking into consideration the timing of a pending decision by NEFMC, the Board decided to postpone action to consider adjusting the trip limit in state waters for the northern region until the Winter Meeting in January 2022.

The Board was presented the FMP Review for the 2020 fishing year. Commercial landings decreased in 2020 by 30% from 2019 and was approximately 55% of the coastwide quota. According to industry input, the decline in landings has been driven by low price per pound and effort. The Board approved the FMP Review, state compliance, and *de minimis* requests from New York and Delaware.

The Board also received an update on the research track assessment. The Work Group was formed this past summer and will consider incorporating spatial distribution of the species by season and over time through tagging data and using new modelling approaches such as stock synthesis. The research track assessment is scheduled to be completed for peer review in July 2022. Following peer review a management track assessment will commence to evaluate how to use information from the research track assessment to inform management decisions.

For more information on management, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior FMP Coordinator, at [krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org).

### ***Motions***

#### **Main Motion**

**Move to set at least a 7500- pound trip limit in the Northern Region (ME through CT) for FY 2022 contingent upon NOAA Fisheries adopting at least a 7500-pound trip limit for federal waters. If at least a 7500-pound trip limit is not approved in federal waters, then the 6,000-pound trip limit will remain in the Northern Region.**

Motion made by Mr. Kane and seconded by Ms. Patterson. Motion postponed.

#### **Motion to Substitute**

**Move to substitute to set the northern region (ME through CT) state waters trip limit for FY 2022 equal to the trip limit in federal waters approved by NOAA fisheries.**

Motion made by Mr. Gates and seconded by Ms. Ware. Motion postponed.

#### **Motion to Postpone**

**Motion to postpone action around the state waters trip limits for FY2022 until the ASMFC winter meeting.**

Motion made by Ms. Ware and seconded by Mr. Borden. Motion passes (7 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 null, 1 abstention).

**Move to accept the FMP Review and state compliance reports for the spiny dogfish 2020/2021 fishing year and *de minimis* requests from New York and Delaware.**

Motion made by Ms. Madsen and seconded by Ms. Meserve. Motion approved by consent.

### **AMERICAN EEL MANAGEMENT BOARD (OCTOBER 22, 2021)**

#### ***Meeting Summary***

The American Eel Management Board met to consider extending Maine's glass eel quota, the Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Review for the 2020 fishing year, and receive an update on the 2022 benchmark stock assessment.

Addendum V (2018) specified Maine's glass eel quota for 2019-2021 at 9,688 pounds. Under the Addendum, the quota could be extended by Board action for three additional years, but only at the status quo level (9,688 pounds). An increase in the quota would require a new addendum. Taking this into consideration, the Board extended Maine's current glass eel quota for fishing years 2022-2024.

The Board was presented the FMP Review for the 2020 fishing year. Commercial yellow eel landings decreased in 2020 by 51% from 2019. According to industry input, the decline in landings has been driven by decreased demand for wild-caught eels from the U.S. for European food markets. Maine's 2020 glass eel landings were 9,652 pounds, below the 2021 state quota. Approved 2020 aquaculture plans for both Maine and North Carolina did not harvest any glass eels. The Board approved the FMP Review, state compliance, and *de minimis* requests from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, District of Columbia, Georgia, and Florida for their yellow eel fisheries.

The Board also received an update on the benchmark stock assessment. The Stock Assessment Subcommittee (SAS) previously noted challenges in modeling approaches given the species unique life history, range, and data limitations. The SAS is currently developing a coastwide delay-difference model and various trend analyses. The benchmark assessment remains on schedule for peer review in 2022.

For more information on the stock assessment, please contact Dr. Kristen Anstead, Stock Assessment Scientist, at [kanstead@asmfc.org](mailto:kanstead@asmfc.org); and for more information on management, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior FMP Coordinator, at [krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org).

### ***Motions***

#### **Move to extend Maine's glass eel quota at its current level 9,688 pounds for an additional three years (2022-2024)**

Motion made by Mr. Keliher and seconded by Mr. Reid. Motion approved by consensus.

#### **Move to approve the American Eel FMP Review and state compliance reports for the 2020 Fishing year, and *de minimis* requests from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, District of Columbia, Georgia, and Florida for their yellow eel fisheries.**

Motion made by Mr. Keliher and seconded by Mr. Woodward. Motion is approved by consensus.

### **INTERSTATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM POLICY BOARD (OCTOBER 22, 2021)**

#### ***Meeting Summary***

The Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board (Policy Board) met with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) to receive an update on the development of the Recreational Harvest Control Rule Addendum/Framework. Following this discussion, the Policy Board met to review an Executive Committee report (see Executive Committee meeting summary earlier in this document); review an update from NOAA Fisheries; discuss a task for the Management and Science Committee; and review progress on the East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning Initiative.

#### **Update on Draft Addendum/Framework on Harvest Control Rule for Bluefish, Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass**

A joint Commission Plan Development Team (PDT) and Council Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT) have been working on the Harvest Control Rule Addendum/Framework as part of the Recreational Reform Initiative. Staff presented updates to the proposed options, including refinements to the metrics used in each option and accountability measures, as well as a summary of the peer review of two recreational fishery models which could be used to inform the setting of management measures under the options. Staff also reviewed recommendations from the PDT/FMAT for next steps for the Policy Board and Council to consider.

Given the scope of work required on the document's full range of options, the Policy Board and Council deferred approving the Draft Addendum/Framework for public comment, and instead will revisit the draft in either December 2021 or early 2022 to provide the PDT/FMAT more time to complete the document. In addition, the PDT/FMAT will continue to assess how the recreational fishery models should be used for developing measures for each of the harvest control rule options. Once approved, the Draft Addendum/Framework will be released for public comment and presented through public hearings.

As a result of the revised timeline, the harvest control rule will not be ready for use in developing 2022 recreational measures for bluefish, summer flounder, black sea bass, and scup. Recreational specifications for all four species will be discussed at the December meeting of the Council and relevant Commission species management boards.

For more information the harvest control rule, please contact Dustin Colson Leaning, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [dleaning@asmfc.org](mailto:dleaning@asmfc.org), Julia Beaty, Fishery Management Specialist with MAFMC, at [jbeaty@mafmc.org](mailto:jbeaty@mafmc.org), or Savannah Lewis, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [slewis@asmfc.org](mailto:slewis@asmfc.org).

### **NOAA Fisheries Update**

NOAA Fisheries reported that it will be considering ways to reduce sea turtle bycatch in several trawl fisheries in the Greater Atlantic Region, including summer flounder, longfin squid, and Atlantic croaker in the near future. For several years, NOAA Fisheries has been conducting research with the industry on various gear modifications that could reduce turtle mortality. More details on the specific measures being considered will be presented to the Commission at its Winter Meeting in late January 2022.

### **Management and Science Committee Tasking on Conservation Equivalency**

The Executive Committee previously raised questions and concerns regarding the use of conservation equivalency (CE) in Commission FMPs. The Committee tasked a subgroup to create a list of tasks for the Management and Science Committee (MSC) to address regarding general concerns that have been raised either by members of the Executive Committee or species management boards, e.g. Atlantic striped bass. Staff presented the list of tasks proposed by the subgroup for the MSC (see PDF page 33 of [supplemental meeting materials](#)). The Policy Board added two additional tasks (1) consider how much preparatory time should be given to technical committees in reviewing CE proposals, and (2) develop standards for evaluating and making recommendations for pre-existing CE measures.

### **East Coast Scenario Planning Initiative**

Lastly, staff provided a progress update on the East Coast Climate Change Scenario Planning Initiative. The Initiative conducted 3 webinars, with over 250 participants. The webinar introduced the Initiative, explained scenario planning, and provided participants with a chance to review the project objectives and provide their own perspectives on climate change. As follow-up to the webinar, an online questionnaire was conducted to gather input on the Initiative, and the forces of change that could affect fisheries over the next 20 years. The Initiative received 383 responses to the survey, containing a wealth of information and perspectives from a wide range of stakeholders. Next steps will include “driving forces” webinars, which will look in detail at research behind some of the possible forces affecting climate change, and in-person workshops to create a framework and a set of scenarios that describe how climate change might affect stock distribution, availability and other aspects of East Coast fisheries by 2040.

For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Policy Director, at [tkerns@asmfc.org](mailto:tkerns@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

### **Motions**

No motions made.