

Fishery Management Plan (FMP) “Highlights” 2016

American Eel

The 1991 Chesapeake Bay American Eel Fishery Management Plan was reviewed and presented to the SFAC and TFAC at the October, 2014 meetings. The review concluded that the plan should be amended to ensure management flexibility when ASMFC’s requirements for regulations change. The draft Amendment 1 to the 1991 Chesapeake Bay American Eel FMP was reviewed at the October 2015 meetings and will be adopted by reference into regulation in 2016.

The ASMFC American Eel Management Board will meet at the ASMFC Spring Meeting on May 3 to discuss potential options for revisiting the yellow eel commercial quota. Fisheries Service sent postcards to commercial fishermen about new eel reporting requirements that will be required if the coastal quota is exceeded. COMAR 08.02.05.08 requiring eel permits became effective 3-28-16 and meets ASMFC requirements under Addendum IV to the Interstate FMP for American Eel coastwide catch cap. If a state quota is implemented, an eel permit holder will need to meet daily reporting requirements. The Department may modify, open or close the season or modify harvest limits by public notice.

American Shad/Hickory Shad/Blueback herring/Alewife herring

The ASMFC 2007 benchmark stock assessment for American shad is scheduled to be updated in 2017. The 2012 river herring assessment is scheduled for an update in 2018. No changes are expected until those updates have been completed and reviewed.

Atlantic Croaker and Spot

The traffic light approach (TLA) to managing croaker and spot is a way to incorporate multiple fishery dependent and independent data sources into a single metric and was adopted by the ASMFC in 2014. The TLA name comes from the assignment of one of three colors (red, yellow, green) to categorize relative indicators of the stock condition for both population levels and harvest metrics. The TLA approach will be in use until the 2016 coastwide benchmark stock assessment for croaker and the first stock assessment for spot are completed. The TLA approach indicated a high “red” for the 2014 croaker harvest metric, but no immediate action is anticipated because three “red” years would be needed for actions to occur.

A data workshop was held in September, 2015; the stock assessments are currently in progress; and the peer reviews are expected to take place in 2016 with possible presentation to the ASMFC Board in 2017.

Atlantic Menhaden

The ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Management Board approved a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 187,880 MT for 2016– an increase of 10%. The menhaden management board will be considering a draft addendum, and the 2015 FMP review and state compliance requirements at the May 4th ASMFC meeting.

ASMFC announced in March that it was funding a socioeconomic study, the primary objective of which is to better understand impacts of potential changes to management of Atlantic Menhaden. The study is intended to characterize the coastwide commercial fisheries and the communities they support.

ASMFC Amendment 3 is currently under development with tentative completion in 2017. The amendment will address ecosystem-based reference points and will revisit allocation. An addendum is also under development to address the 12,000 lbs per vessel per day bycatch allowance.

Black Drum

A coastwide stock assessment was conducted in 2015. The ASMFC Board made no changes to the management program.

Black Sea Bass

The distribution of black sea bass along the Atlantic coast seems to be expanding. The Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP) data have indicated a shift in the center of the population. Tagging studies have identified that black sea bass exhibit spawning site fidelity so the recent ASMFC Addendum XXVII on regional management is appropriate. The next benchmark coastwide stock assessment is expected to be peer-reviewed through the Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workgroup Stock Assessment Review Committee in late fall, 2016.

The coastwide quota has been increased from 2.2 million pounds to 2.7 million pounds for 2016, based on updated catch and survey data. Maryland's 2016 commercial quota (based on an 11% allocation) was increased to 298,289 pounds.

Bluefish

ASMFC completed a benchmark stock assessment in 2015. The stock assessment workshop concluded that the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. Biomass estimates and reference points have been updated. The 2014 Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) estimate of 191 million pounds is under the target of 223 million pounds. Fishing mortality in 2014 was estimated at 0.157 – under the threshold of 0.19.

No new actions are under development.

Catfish

Catfish management is mainly concerned with invasive species, primarily blue catfish and flathead catfish. The Chesapeake Bay Program Sustainable Fisheries GIT Invasive Catfish Task Force coordinates and recommends actions to implement five policy objectives listed in the Invasive Catfish Policy Adoption Statement:

http://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/final_catfish_policy_git_1-24-12_%28with_signatures%29.pdf

A pilot study was conducted to test the effectiveness of controlling catfish in VA rivers and a report was released (March 31, 2016) to the GIT. This study showed that electrofishing removed an average of 26.8 pounds of catfish per minute with no unintended bycatch:

http://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/Final_Report_Electrofishing_FRG_2015-01.pdf

HB 63 passed in the 2016 Maryland General Assembly. The intent of this bill is to allow the Department to establish rules for the use of commercial trotlines to target blue and flathead catfish.

Horseshoe Crab

The 2016 Maryland quota is 255,980 male crabs. The Maryland seasons are from May 2 through July 8 for the offshore fishery, with a limit of 150 for permit holders and 25 crabs for non-permit holders; and from July 9 through November 30 for tidal waters with a limit indicated on the permit.

In 2016, the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) plan will be reviewed and updated. Areas of possible change include valuation of female horseshoe crabs, alternative harvest packages, abundance thresholds for female horseshoe crabs, and the possibility of including the biomedical data in the framework. Presentation will be given at the May ASMFC meeting (tentatively scheduled for May 3, 2016). No changes are anticipated for the biomedical industry.

The VIMS trawl survey has received funding for 2016.

A new stock assessment is expected in 2017.

King and Spanish Mackerel

In August, 2015, the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council Board extended provisions of Addendum 1 to the Spanish Mackerel FMP for 2015 and 2016. This addendum established a pilot program that allowed states to reduce minimum size limits for the commercial pound net fishery to 11 ½” from July through September. The intention of this minimum size reduction is to reduce waste of smaller fish by converting them from dead discards to landed fish that can be counted against the quota.

The South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board will review North Carolina’s report on Spanish mackerel pound net landings at the Spring ASMFC meeting on May 5.

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council mackerel, squid and butterfish advisory panel will meet by webinar on May 2 to review recent fishery performance and develop fishery performance reports for those species in preparation for the Council’s review of the 2015-2017 specifications.

Maryland has a 14” minimum size limit and is unaffected by Addendum 1.

Red Drum

The Chesapeake Bay Red Drum FMP was reviewed in 2015 and presented to SFAC and TFAC for comments. The ASMFC’s red drum stock assessment subcommittee (SASC) worked on a

new benchmark stock assessment through 2015. The workshop focused on model development: the SASC improved the model by using mark & recapture data, now called the SS3 and will present the results at the 2016 Spring meeting May 5. The South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board will review and consider the 2016 benchmark stock assessment for management use and discuss the next steps for red drum management. The public comment guidelines can be found as part of the meeting agenda: <http://www.asmfc.org/home/2016-spring-meeting>

Scup

A coastwide stock assessment in 2015 concluded that the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring but a slight decrease in SSB is projected in the future. The coastwide commercial quota was slightly reduced (ASMFC & MAFMC) to 20.47 M pounds and the recreational harvest limit was set at 6.09 M pounds.

The table used by the ASMFC press release on 8-17-15 shows coastwide commercial quotas and recreational limits for scup and summer flounder to 2018 and black sea bass to 2017: <http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/55d1f9ecpr28Mid-AtlanticMultyyearSpecs.pdf>

Summer Flounder

The Summer Flounder Amendment Fishery Management Action Team is revising goals and objectives for review by ASMFC and MAFMC. The amendment timeline can be viewed at: <http://static1.squarespace.com/static/511cdc7fe4b00307a2628ac6/t/56a2843f7086d70e9316d8fa/1453491263523/SF+Amendment+Action+Plan+V5+-+1-19-16.pdf>

The 2015 stock assessment update indicated that summer flounder is not overfished but the stock is experiencing overfishing.

The 2016 Maryland recreational size limit is 16" with a daily creel limit of 4. Commercial size limits are 16" if caught by hook & line and 14" if caught by other gear. Commercial quotas apply to harvest permits. The summer flounder fishing season is year-round for both sectors.

Tautog

The ASMFC Tautog Management Board approved the 2015 benchmark stock assessment and peer review report for management use: http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file//54eccd8cTautogStockAssessment_PeerReviewReport_Feb2015.pdf

ASMFC Amendment 1 is expected to be completed in 2016 and implemented in 2017.

The ASMFC Law Enforcement Committee will review tautog tagging program options at the Spring Meeting on May 3.

Weakfish and Spotted Seatrout

The ASMFC Weakfish Management Board will review and consider the 2016 weakfish benchmark stock assessment for management use at its Spring Meeting on May 5. The Board

will also discuss next steps for management considering the results of the benchmark assessment – which can be found here:

http://www.asmfc.org/files/Meetings/2016SpringMtg/WeakfishManagementBoard_red.pdf

The Fisheries Service review of the Chesapeake Bay Weakfish and Spotted Sea Trout FMP was presented to the SFAC and TFAC at the May 2013 meetings.

White Perch

A White Perch FMP review was completed and presented to the SFAC and TFAC in 2015 for comments. Annual updates to the FMP provide additional information on harvest.

The 2014 Chesapeake Bay Program Watershed Agreement and Forage Workshop (Nov. 2014) recognized the importance of forage species and the role these species play in ecosystem-based fisheries management. Members of the Fisheries GIT meeting on Dec. 14, 2015 were presented with a summary of the Forage Workshop and forage indicators and consumption profiles for Chesapeake Bay fishes were discussed (Buchheister et. al, 2015). White perch were identified as one of six dominant predators consuming the most prey based on the VIMS survey data.

http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/23179/3_buchheister_git_meeting_12-14-15_final.pdf

Yellow Perch

An amendment to the Maryland Yellow Perch FMP has been drafted and is being reviewed internally by Fisheries Service. Once the internal review is completed the draft will be available for review by the SFAC and TFAC. The amendment reflects the changes in management that has occurred since the plan was developed in 2002.

