



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Winter 2007 Meeting Summary

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

Winter 2007 Meeting Week
Alexandria, VA
January 29 – February 1, 2007

For more information, please contact
the identified individual,
Robert Beal, ISFMP, or
Tina Berger, Public Affairs

202/289-6400

Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (JANUARY 29, 2007)	3
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	3
<i>Motions</i>	3
AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD (JANUARY 29, 2007)	4
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	4
<i>Motions</i>	4
TAUTOG MANAGEMENT BOARD (JANUARY 30, 2007)	5
<i>Press Release</i>	5
<i>Motions</i>	6
COMMITTEE OF ECONOMICS & SOCIAL SCIENCES (JANUARY 30, 2007)	6
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	6
SPINY DOGFISH AND COASTAL SHARKS MANAGEMENT BOARD (JANUARY 30, 2007)	7
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	7
<i>Motions</i>	7
STURGEON MANAGEMENT BOARD (JANUARY 30, 2007)	8
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	8
<i>Motions</i>	8
AMERICAN EEL MANAGEMENT BOARD (JANUARY 30, 2007)	8
<i>Press Release</i>	8
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	9
<i>Motions</i>	9
ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD (JANUARY 30, 2007)	9
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	9

<i>Motions</i>	9
SHAD AND RIVER HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD (JANUARY 31, 2007)	10
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	10
<i>Motions</i>	10
SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP, AND BLACK SEA BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (JANUARY 31, 2007)	10
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	10
<i>Motions</i>	11
WINTER FLOUNDER MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 1, 2007)	11
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	11
<i>Motions</i>	12
WEAKFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 1, 2007)	12
<i>Press Release</i>	12
<i>Motions</i>	13
ISFMP POLICY BOARD (FEBRUARY 1, 2007)	15
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	15
<i>Motions</i>	16

ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (January 29, 2007)

Meeting Summary

The Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board met to review an update from the Technical Committee and review and consider approval of a proposal from Maryland to eliminate the quota management system in place for the Chesapeake Bay spring trophy fishery. A second proposal from North Carolina to increase the total allowable catch in the Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River fishery was withdrawn prior to the meeting.

Maryland Department of Natural Resources submitted a proposal to the Commission to eliminate the hard harvest quota on the Chesapeake Bay spring trophy fishery. The proposed management system, while eliminating the quota, would have kept the other regulations for the fishery in place (the approximately one month long fishing season, a large minimum size limit, and a one fish creel limit) and maintained Maryland's current harvest monitoring program. The motion to approve the proposal failed, with Board members discussing equity concerns, monitoring needs, effort considerations, socioeconomic issues, and the desire to know the results of the upcoming stock assessment before considering the proposed action.

Subsequently, Maryland proposed, and the Board approved, a harvest target for the 2007 spring trophy fishery of the baseline quota minus the 2006 overage (26,283 fish), to be no less than 30,000 fish. Maryland must adopt new regulations, approved by the Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee, to reach the target harvest level. This management system was approved for the 2007 fishery only and the Board will revisit the regulations prior to the 2008 season.

Doug Grout, chair of the Atlantic Striped Bass Technical Committee (TC), provided an update to the Board following the TC's meeting earlier in January. This update covered the TC's analysis of the proposal from Maryland and progress on the 2007 stock assessment. The latter included a review of the Terms of Reference for the stock assessment, which required and received the Board's approval, discussion of a potential new model for the assessment, and a timeline of important dates for the assessment process, as listed below.

- June 15, 2007** – State compliance reports due with all data needed for stock assessment
- Late July/early August** – Assessment workshops for both the Stock Assessment Subcommittee and the Tagging Subcommittee
- September 4** – Stock assessment report (SAR) due to ASMFC staff
- Mid-September** – Striped Bass TC meeting to review and approve/disapprove SAR
- November/December** – Peer Review of SAR
- January 2008** – Management Board approve/disapprove peer reviewed SAR

For more information, please contact Nichola Meserve, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or nmeserve@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to substitute a Chesapeake Bay spring striped bass fishery quota with non-quota management through a freeze for status quo Maryland migrant fish regulations that have consistently been in place and allowing the spring harvest of migrants to fluctuate naturally with stock abundance and weather conditions, and to forecast harvest ranges expected each year and report subsequent harvest assessment post season to the technical committee for inspection by the Board.

Motion made by Mr. King, second by Mr. Carpenter. Motion fails (7 opposed, 6 in favor, 2 abstentions).

Move to set a target for the Chesapeake Bay spring striped bass fishery based on past VPA calculated methods and the payback for the 2006 overage to establish a Chesapeake Bay spring striped bass fishery quota no less than 30,000 fish for 2007 only.

Motion made by Mr. King, second by Mr. Carpenter. Motion passes (10 in favor, 3 opposed, 2 abstentions).

AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD (January 29, 2007)

Meeting Summary

The American Lobster Board approved Addendum X to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. The Addendum establishes a coastwide reporting and data collection program that includes dealer and harvester reporting, at-sea sampling, port sampling, and fishery-independent data collection.

The Board also reviewed the progress being made on the development of draft Amendment 5 to the Lobster FMP, which includes options for a maximum size, the v-notch possession rule, and limits of permits. The Plan Development Team is continuing to develop the document for Board consideration for public comment at the spring 2007 meeting.

The Plan Review Team (PRT) reviewed the regulations for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the State of Rhode Island for consistency with the measures outlined in Addendum VII to the Lobster FMP. The PRT found the regulations consistent with the plan, but found some differences in language in the regulations between the two states. The PRT suggested language changes to the Rhode Island regulations under material incapacitation and reported traps fished. The Rhode Island section delineating material incapacitation has the potential to allocate more traps than those intended by the plan and enacted by Commonwealth of Massachusetts; thus the PRT suggested replacing “adversely affected his/her fishing performance” with “prevented the permit holder from fishing.” The insertion of the term “sustained” into the reported traps fished definition in the Rhode Island regulations is different than that specified by Addendum VII. In the absence of a definition for sustained, the regulation could possibly result in a different formula for allocation traps for Rhode Island fishermen compared to that used for those in other states. It is recommended that the word “sustain” be struck from the Rhode Island regulations. These recommendations will be sent to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator for Management, at (202) 289-6400 or tkerns@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to accept Option 3 under 1A at least 10% of active harvesters reporting (with the expectation of 100% of license holders reporting in time) and under 1B strike “hours fished” and add “price per pound.”

Motion made by Mr. Lapointe, second by Mr. Smith. Motion passes (5 in favor, 4 opposed, 2 abstentions).

Move to approve Addendum X as modified by the previous motion.

Motion made by Mr. Lapointe, second by Mr. Augustine. Motion passes.

Move to approve Addendum XI for public hearing and to provide the PDT the opportunity to make editorial changes prior to its release.

Motion made by Mr. Colvin, second by Rep. Abbott. Motion passes (8 in favor, 3 opposed).

Move to accept the PRT recommendations regarding Addendum VII implementation and to forward the recommendations to Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Motion made by Mr. Lapointe, second by Mr. Augustine. Motion carries (6 in favor, 1 opposed, 4 abstentions).

TAUTOG MANAGEMENT BOARD (January 30, 2007)

Press Release

**ASMFC Tautog Board Approves Addendum IV
*Addendum Establishes Stock Rebuilding Program***

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s Tautog Management Board approved Addendum IV to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Tautog. The Addendum initiates a stock rebuilding program for tautog through the establishment of coastwide target and threshold levels for spawning stock biomass (SSB), and a new fishing mortality target. Under the new program, states will be required to reduce fishing mortality by 28%. The recreational sector, which accounts for 90% of tautog harvest, can expect the implementation of more restrictive management measures by January 1, 2008. These measures may include decreased bag limits and seasonal closures.

This action was taken in response to the findings of the 2005 peer-reviewed stock assessment, as well as those of the recently updated virtual population analysis (VPA). The assessment indicates that the tautog resource remains at low biomass levels. Since the mid-1980s, tautog has undergone a substantial decrease in total and spawning stock biomass. Both indicators are currently at levels about one-third their early time series average. Based on the current fishing mortality target ($F = 0.30$) and the recent fishing mortality estimates for the last two years, overfishing is not occurring.

To allow fisheries managers to assess the status of the stock, the Addendum establishes for the first time a SSB target of 26,800 metric tons and a SSB threshold of 20,100 metric tons. Based on these new reference points, the tautog resource, with an estimated SSB of 10,600 metric tons, is considered overfished. To initiate rebuilding, the Addendum establishes a new fishing mortality target of 0.20, compared to the current fishing mortality rate of 0.28. Under this scenario, states will be required to reduce fishing mortality in their recreational sectors by 28.6%. States will have until January 1, 2008 to fully implement the Addendum. The Board is scheduled to meet in May to review and approve state proposals for their recreational fisheries. A rebuilt stock would provide important benefits to recreational, commercial, and for-hire fisheries.

The Board also received a report from the Commission’s Law Enforcement Committee regarding the illegal live fish fishery that has been perceived by some as increasing in magnitude throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. The Board expressed its concern about this issue and committed to closely monitor enforcement efforts on the tautog fishery.

Copies of the Addendum will be available by early February and can be obtained by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400 or via the Commission’s website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News. For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at cvonderweidt@asmfc.org or (202) 289-6400.

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PR07-02

Motions

Move to adopt Option 2 of Issue 1 for a biomass reference point.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine, second by Mr. Tinsman. Motion passes.

Move to adopt Option 3 of Issue 2 for a fishing mortality reference point.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine, second by Mr. Gibson. Motion substituted.

Substitute Motion:

Move to substitute to adopt Option 2 of Issue 2 for a fishing mortality reference point.

Motion made by Mr. Travelstead, second by Mr. Calomo. Motion to substitute passes.

Main Motion:

Move to adopt Option 2 of Issue 2 for a fishing mortality reference point.

Motion made by Mr. Travelstead, second by Mr. Calomo. Motion passes.

Move that the states' implementation date of Addendum IV be January 1, 2008.

Motion made by Mr. Adler, second by Mr. Berg. Motion passes.

Move to approve Addendum IV as modified by today's Board decisions.

Motion made by Mr. Calomo, second by Mr. Colvin. Motion passes.

COMMITTEE OF ECONOMICS & SOCIAL SCIENCES (January 30, 2007)

Meeting Summary

The Committee on Economics and Social Sciences (CESS) reviewed proposals by contractors to perform a socioeconomic study on the effects of some horseshoe crab fishery closures effective October 1, 2006 under Addendum IV to the Horseshoe Crab Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The directed harvest and landing of horseshoe crabs in the states of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia is prohibited under this Addendum for a two-year period; specifically for both male and female horseshoe crabs in the first half of the calendar year, and for female crabs the second half of the year in the states of New Jersey and Delaware only. The Committee recommended that the ISFMP Policy Board approve the core of the proposal submitted by Industrial Economics, Inc., which would analyze trip ticket data in the affected states (including New York) for the horseshoe crab fishery and other dependent fisheries using horseshoe crab for bait (eel and whelk). The Committee also recommended further discussions with the potential contractor on the possibility, within budgetary constraints, of determining the effect of the closures on the local economy with the use of an input/output model.

CESS also provided some recommendations for updating the list of economists, social scientists, and anthropologists that are appointed to the ISFMP technical committees and plan development teams. Participation in this capacity is an important way for social and economic considerations to be incorporated into the Commission's amendments and FMPs. The CESS also approved a guidance document that will aid in writing the socioeconomic sections of FMPs and amendments.

SPINY DOGFISH AND COASTAL SHARKS MANAGEMENT BOARD (January 30, 2007)

Meeting Summary

The Commission's Spiny Dogfish and Coastal Sharks Management Board voted to increase the 2006/2007 quota to allow a maximum harvest of six million pounds and set state specified trip limits of up to 3,000 pounds for the 2007/2008 fishing season at 3,000 lbs.

At the October 2006 meeting, the Board voted to increase the 2006/2007 quota from four to six million pounds. Due to the timing of the meeting and the two weeks that it takes to re-open a fishery, the 2 million pound annual increase only applied to the second period of the quota that began on November 1, 2006. The end result was an overall increase of 800,000 pounds, a number well below the 2 million pound increase that the maker-of-the-motion had originally intended. In order to legally harvest the full two million pounds, the Board voted to "allow a maximum harvest of six-million pounds for the 2006/2007 fishing season." The ASMFC will notify states regarding the opportunity to re-open their spiny dogfish fishery shortly.

The Board also voted to allow states to adopt their own trip limits up to 3,000 lbs for the 2007/2008 fishing season. At the October 2006 meeting, the Board approved state specified trip limits for 2006/2007 but postponed setting the trip limits for 2007/2008. Armed with the knowledge of how state specified trip limits had affected the fishery since November, the Board revisited the issue. After deliberation, the Board found state specified trip limits up to 3,000 pounds to be the most appropriate for the 2007/2008 fishing season.

The 2007/2008 state specifications for spiny dogfish include state specified trip limits up to 3,000 pounds and a 6 million pound quota. For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at cvonderweidt@asmfc.org or (202) 289-6400.

Motions

Move to accept the 2005/2006 FMP review.

Motion by Mr. Augustine. Motion passes.

Move to approve *de minimis* status for DE, SC, GA, FL, and ME.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine, second by Mr. Adler. Motion carries.

Move to clarify the intent of the October 2006 motion regarding the 2006/2007 spiny dogfish quota by allowing a maximum harvest of spiny dogfish for the 2006/2007 fishing year of 6 million pounds.

Motion made by Dr. Pierce, second by Mr. Munden. Motion carries (14 in favor, 2 opposed, 0 abstentions, 0 null).

Motion to bring back to the floor the postponed motion "Move to allow the states to adopt their own trip limits to promote bycatch landings and a small-scale directed fishery for 2007/2008 fishing season."

Motion made by Mr. Augustine, second by Mr. Frampton. Motion carries.

Move to allow the states to adopt their own trip limits to promote bycatch landings and a small-scale directed fishery for 2007/2008 fishing season.

Motion made by Dr. Pierce, second by Mr. Petronio. Motion amended.

Motion to Amend:

Move to amend to include "not to exceed 3,000 pounds" after the words "trip limits" in line 2 above.

Motion made by Mr. Colvin, second by Mr. R. White. Motion to amend passes (12 in favor, 1 opposed, 3 abstentions, 0 null).

Main Motion as Amended:

Move to allow the states to adopt their own trip limits not to exceed 3,000 pounds to promote bycatch landings and a small-scale directed fishery for 2007/2008 fishing season.

Motion carries (10 in favor, 3 opposed, 2 abstentions, 1 null).

STURGEON MANAGEMENT BOARD (January 30, 2007)

Meeting Summary

The Sturgeon Management Board heard presentations on the FMP Review, the PRT Report, and the upcoming Atlantic Sturgeon Bycatch Workshop to review the NMFS observer database. Following the presentation of the PRT Report and FMP Review, the Board voted to approve both documents. A representative from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service presented the Board with an update on the status reviews of Atlantic sturgeon and shortnose sturgeon. For more information, please contact Erika Robbins, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or erobbins@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to approve the FMP Review with the noted corrections.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine, second by Dr. Geiger. Motion passes.

AMERICAN EEL MANAGEMENT BOARD (January 30, 2007)

Press Release

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s American Eel Management Board approved the development of Draft Addendum II to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Eel. The Draft Addendum will propose a number of management options to facilitate an increase in the number of adult American eel (also known as silver eel) that are able to out-migrate to the ocean and spawn. Specific options include gear and size restrictions, seasonal closures, management triggers based on juvenile abundance indices, and recommendations to protect the upstream and downstream migration of American eel.

The Board initiated the Addendum due to continued concern for the American eel population. While the status of the stock is uncertain, the latest stock assessment information indicates the abundance of yellow eel (a juvenile life-stage of the American eel) has declined in the last two decades and the stock is at or near low levels. Further, relative abundance is likely to continue to decline unless mortality decreases and/or recruitment increases. As such, the primary management objective of the Draft Addendum will be to facilitate escapement of silver eel on their spawning migration with the intent of halting any further declines in juvenile recruitment and eel abundance.

The Draft Addendum will be available for Board consideration at either the Commission’s Spring or Summer Meeting in Alexandria, Virginia. If approved, it will be made available for public comment in the summer, with final Board approval anticipated for fall 2007. For more information, please contact Erika Robbins, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or erobbins@asmfc.org.

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PR07-01

Meeting Summary

The American Eel Management Board heard presentations on the American Eel Young-of-Year Workshop, American eel management in the Great Lakes and Canada, and potential management options developed by the American Eel Plan Development Team. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced the findings of the Status Review of American eel: “protecting the eel as an endangered or threatened species under the Endangered Species Act is not warranted.”

Following the presentation by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission on management of American eel in the Great Lakes and Canada, the Board decided to ask the Policy Board to consider granting the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and Canada a seat on the American Eel Management Board. The Board will also consider establishing a delegation to meet with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and Canada to discuss the management of American eel.

The Plan Development Team presented the Board with the management options they had developed to increase out-migration of silver eel. The Board voted to approve the development of Draft Addendum II, which will include the management options presented by the Plan Development Team—gear restrictions, size limits, seasonal closures, management triggers, and recommendations to protect upstream and downstream migration. In its final order of business, the Board elected Mr. Pat Augustine as Board Vice-Chair. For more information, please contact Erika Robbins, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or erobbins@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to nominate Pat Augustine as the vice chairman of the American Eel Management Board.

Motion made by Rep. Abbott, second by Sen. Damon. Motion passes.

ATLANTIC MENHADEN MANAGEMENT BOARD (January 30, 2007)

Meeting Summary

The Board met to hear a report on menhaden reduction landings from Chesapeake Bay. Preliminary reduction landings from the Chesapeake Bay for 2006 are approximately 65,000 metric tons. The final landings number for 2006 is expected to stay well below the 109,000 metric tons cap established by Addendum III.

The Board also heard an update on research activities in the Chesapeake Bay area from Derek Orner of the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office (NCBO). The NCBO is currently accepting proposals until March 12, 2007, for research, monitoring, and modeling of various aspects of Chesapeake Bay fisheries. The NCBO announced that its annual Fisheries Symposium will be held April 10-12, 2007, at the Patuxent Wildlife Refuge Visitor’s Center in Laurel, Maryland. It also noted that a report titled, ‘Menhaden Research Program: A Collaborative Research Effort,’ may be available about the time of the Symposium. Much of the research included in the report will be presented at the Symposium. The Menhaden Technical Committee will meet the day after the Symposium to further discuss research and begin exploring modeling approaches for the 2009 peer-reviewed stock assessment. For more information, please contact Braddock Spear, Senior Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator for Policy, at (202)289-6400 or bspear@asmfc.org.

Motions

No motions made.

SHAD AND RIVER HERRING MANAGEMENT BOARD (January 31, 2007)

Meeting Summary

The Shad and River Herring Management Board approved Virginia's proposal to continue to permit landings of in-river American shad bycatch in 2007. The Board was presented with this new time line for the American Shad Stock Assessment:

- **February 12** – All stock assessment documents must be provided to Andy Kahnle (Chair) and Erika Robbins (FMP Coordinator)
- **March 12** – Compilation of finalized assessments by subset of SASC
- **April 16** – SASC review of compiled document
- **May 14** – TC review of stock assessment
- **May 28** – SASC review of TC comments and final changes to Stock Assessment
- **June 11** – Stock Assessment will be sent to peer review participants
- **July 16** – The peer review will meet and create their report
- **August 13** – Presentation of the Stock Assessment and Peer Review Report to the Board

For items in the above time line that require more than one day, the date indicates the week in which the item should be completed.

Mike Hendricks, Technical Committee Chair, presented the Board with the Technical Committee's recommendations to (1) require trip-level reporting to document American shad ocean bycatch, and (2) postpone the creel survey requirement contained in Amendment 1 until after the completion of the American Shad Stock Assessment and the template for riverine creel surveys. The Board approves state exemption from the creel survey requirement. The Board was presented with a research method for identifying the stock origin of fish found in mixed stocks; the Board recommends that this research method become a research priority for American shad. For more information, please contact Erika Robbins, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or erobbins@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move approval of the status quo option that Virginia presented for the shad bycatch fishery.
Motion made by Mr. Travelstead, second by Mr. Adler. Motion passes (19 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 null).

SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP, AND BLACK SEA BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (January 31, 2007)

Meeting Summary

The Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board reviewed and accepted summer flounder state recreational proposals and a methodology to establish regional measures. States will establish their 2007 recreational measures from these approved approaches prior to the start of the 2007 recreational season.

The Board reviewed and approved draft Amendment 14 for public comment. The purpose of this Amendment is to develop a rebuilding plan for the scup stock, thereby preventing overfishing and rebuilding the scup stock to the level associated with maximum sustainable yield (B_{msy}) through a suite of options. A press release announcing public hearings for the draft amendment will be released in early February.

The Board initiated an addendum that will be reviewed and considered for public comment at the Commission's Spring Meeting Week. This addendum will include options to extend Addendum XII,

which expires on January 1, 2008. Addendum XII set the state-by-state shares for the black sea bass fishery. Also included in the initiated addendum will be options to explore changes to the summer flounder recreational allocation. Lastly, the addendum will include options to allow the Board to change biological reference points during the specification setting process following stock assessment reviews

The Board will forward a recommendation to the NRCC to delay the review of the black sea bass stock assessment from June of 2007 to the summer of 2008. This delay will allow additional work on a tagging model to be conducted. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator for Management, at (202)289-6400 or tkerns@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to approve the Technical Committee's approved state 2007 summer flounder recreational proposals.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine, second by Mr. Calomo. Motion passes.

Move to amend previous action to instate state-by-state conservation equivalency for 2007 summer flounder recreational measures and consider coastwide measures for the 2007 summer flounder recreational fishery.

Motion made by Mr. Colvin, second by Mr. Smith. Motion fails.

Move to rescind the scup and black sea bass quotas approved in August 2006 and establish a black sea bass quota of 5 million pounds and a scup TAC of 13.97 million pounds/TAL of 12.0 million pounds that are identical to those published for 2007 by NMFS.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, second by Mr. Colvin. Motion fails for lack of 2/3 vote.

Move to approve Draft Amendment 14 for Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass for public review and comment.

Motion made by Mr. Colvin, second by Dr. Pierce. Motion carries.

Move to approve the nominations of Michael Fedosh and Michelle Doran McBean as non-traditional stakeholders to the Summer Flounder Advisory Panel and Howard Rothweiler and Roman Jesien as non-traditional stakeholders to the Black Sea Bass Advisory Panel.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine, second by Mr. Adler. Motion carries.

Move that the Board initiate an addendum to extend the state-by-state commercial quota system for black sea bass.

Motion made by Mr. Colvin, second Mr. McCloy. Motion carries.

Move to include in the addendum the allowance for a change in the specification process for reference points.

Motion made by Mr. Augustine, second by Mr. Carpenter. Motion carries.

Move that we request that the NRCC extend the black sea bass review until summer 2008.

Motion made by Mr. Pierce, second by Mr. Colvin. Motion carries.

WINTER FLOUNDER MANAGEMENT BOARD (February 1, 2007)

Meeting Summary

The Winter Flounder Management Board received a report on the status of the winter flounder resource and fisheries for both the Gulf of Maine (GOM) and Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA)

stock components. The Gulf of Maine stock component remains strong, and is neither overfished nor is overfishing occurring. The SNE/MA stock component remains at low levels of biomass and is considered overfished with overfishing occurring. All involved states were found to have met or exceeded the plan's requirements. The State of Delaware requested and was granted *de minimis* status. For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or cvonderweidt@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to approve the Winter Flounder Plan Review Team Report and *de minimis* status for Delaware.

Motion made by Mr. Colvin, second by Mr. Berg. Motion passes.

WEAKFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD (February 1, 2007)

Press Release

ASMFC Weakfish Board Approves Addendum II *Addendum to Control Expansion of the Fishery*

Alexandria, VA – The Commission's Weakfish Management Board approved Addendum II to Amendment 4 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Weakfish. Under the Addendum, the states of Massachusetts through North Carolina will be required to implement a six fish creel limit at their current size limit for the recreational fishery. South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, because of their insignificant weakfish landings, will maintain their current creel and size limits. The Addendum establishes a coastwide commercial landings limit of approximately 3.7 million pounds (based on the average landings for 2000-2004). The Addendum also reduces the allowable bycatch limit from 300 pounds to 150 pounds per day or trip.

The Board's action was taken in response to a significant decline in stock abundance and increasing total mortality since 1999. As a result of the stock's overfished status, the Board is required under Amendment 4 to adjust the management program to help rebuild spawning stock biomass. This issue is compounded by the fact that natural mortality, rather than fishing mortality, has been indicated as the lead cause for stock decline.

In order to provide a greater probability of the stock rebounding, the Board has implemented a more conservative recreational creel limit, a commercial bycatch limit, and an annual commercial landings limit. These management measures will be re-evaluated when either the coastwide commercial landings equal or exceed 80% of the commercial landings limit or any single state's landings exceed its five-year mean by more than 25% in any single year.

States are required to fully implement the Addendum by October 29, 2007. Copies of the final Addendum will be available by March via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400.

The Board also approved sending forward for public comment Draft Addendum III. This Addendum addresses an inconsistency in bycatch reduction device requirements between the Commission's FMP and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Shrimp Amendment 6. A press release announcing the document's availability and schedule for public hearings will be distributed over the next few weeks.

For more information, please contact Nichola Meserve, Weakfish Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or nmeserve@asmfc.org.

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PR07-03

Motions

Move to approve *de minimis* status for South Carolina.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, second by Mr. Frampton. Motion approved.

Move to approve the following management measures under Addendum II of the Weakfish Plan:

- 1. For the recreational fishery:**
 - a. Status quo for Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina**
 - b. South Carolina to adopt a 12” size limit and 6 fish creel limit**
 - c. All other jurisdictions maintain fishing size limits and adopt a 4 fish creel limit**
 - d. No seasonal closures**
- 2. For the commercial fishery:**
 - a. Adopt a coastwide commercial cap based on the mean of the five-year period of 2000-2004 (3.75 m)**
 - b. All other commercial regulation would remain as they are now**

These recreational and commercial management measures will be re-evaluated when either the coastwide commercial landings equal or exceed 80% of the cap or any single state’s landings exceed their five-year mean by more than 25% in any single year.

Motion made by Mr. Carpenter, second by Mr. Colvin. Motion amended.

Move to amend the motion in Section 1 (a) to strike the words “and North Carolina”.

Motion made by Mr. Smith, second by Mr. Culhane. Motion carries.

Amended Motion:

Move to approve the following management measures under Addendum II of the Weakfish Plan:

- 1. For the recreational fishery:**
 - a. Status quo for Florida and Georgia**
 - b. South Carolina to adopt a 12” size limit and 6 fish creel limit**
 - c. All other jurisdictions maintain fishing size limits and adopt a 4 fish creel limit**
 - d. No seasonal closures**
- 2. For the commercial fishery:**
 - a. Adopt a coastwide commercial cap based on the mean of the five-year period of 2000-2004 (3.75 m)**
 - b. All other commercial regulation would remain as they are now**

These recreational and commercial management measures will be re-evaluated when either the coastwide commercial landings equal or exceed 80% of the cap or any single state’s landings exceed their five-year mean by more than 25% in any single year.

Motion made by Mr. Carpenter, second by Mr. Colvin. Motion amended.

Move to amend section 1 (c) to replace 4 fish creel limit with a “6 fish creel limit.”

Motion made by Mr. McCloy; second by Dr. Daniel. Amended motion carries.

Amended Motion:

Move to approve the following management measures under Addendum II of the Weakfish Plan:

- 1. For the recreational fishery:**

- a. The *de minimis* southeastern states (FL, GA, SC) will remain status quo with the understanding that South Carolina is pursuing creel and size limits in the legislature
 - b. All other jurisdictions maintain fishing size limits and adopt a 6 fish creel limit
 - c. No seasonal closures
2. For the commercial fishery:
- a. Adopt a coastwide commercial cap based on the mean of the five-year period of 2000-2004 (3.75 m)
 - b. Reduce the commercial bycatch allowance to 150 pounds per trip
 - c. All other commercial regulation would remain as they are now

These recreational and commercial management measures will be re-evaluated when either the coastwide commercial landings equal or exceed 80% of the cap or any single state's landings exceed their five-year mean by more than 25% in any single year.

Motion made by Mr. Carpenter, second by Mr. Colvin. Amended motion carries.

Main Motion as Amended:

Move to approve the following management measures under Addendum II of the Weakfish Plan:

1. For the recreational fishery:
- a. The *de minimis* southeastern states (FL, GA, SC) will remain status quo with the understanding that South Carolina is pursuing creel and size limits in the legislature
 - b. All other jurisdictions maintain fishing size limits and adopt a 6 fish creel limit
 - c. No seasonal closures
2. For the commercial fishery:
- a. Adopt a coastwide commercial cap based on the mean of the five-year period of 2000-2004 (3.75 m)
 - b. Reduce the commercial bycatch allowance to 150 pounds per trip
 - c. All other commercial regulation would remain as they are now

These recreational and commercial management measures will be re-evaluated when either the coastwide commercial landings equal or exceed 80% of the cap or any single state's landings exceed their five-year mean by more than 25% in any single year.

Motion carries.

Move that states must submit plans to implement management measures on April 6, 2007. States must implement management measures by October 29, 2007.

Motion made by Mr. Colvin, second by Mr. Berg. Motion carries.

Move to approve Addendum II to Amendment 4 to the Weakfish FMP as modified today.

Motion made by Mr. Carpenter, second by Mr. Culhane. Motion carries.

Move to select option 2: the complimentary management measure with the SAFMC as the ASMFC preferred option for public comment in Addendum III and approve the document for public comment.

Motion made by Dr. Daniel, second by Dr. Rhodes. Motion carries.

Move to approve nomination of Joe Cimino (VMRC) to the Weakfish Stock Assessment Subcommittee and the Weakfish Plan Review Team.

Motion made by Mr. Lazar, second by Dr. Rhodes. Motion carries.

Move to nominate Roy Miller as Vice-Chair of the Weakfish Management Board.

Motion made by Mr. Pankowski. Motion carries.

ISFMP POLICY BOARD (February 1, 2007)

Meeting Summary

The Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board met to address a number of issues. The Policy Board reviewed an updated discussion paper on public participation in the Commission process. The paper included a series of options to provide additional structure to the public participation at Commission meetings. The Board refined the public comment policy. The elements of the policy include the continued opportunity for comment to management boards at the beginning of meetings on issues that are not included on the agenda. The Policy Board determined that many issues being considered by management boards have been made available prior to the meeting. The Policy Board determined that for any issue that has been taken out for public hearing, the public will only be given only minimal comment opportunity during meetings. The Policy Board made this determination based on the recognition of the numerous public comment opportunities and concern that individuals that have the resources to travel to ASMFC meetings have increased access to the management boards.

The Policy Board also reviewed a draft problem statement and charge to an Allocation Subcommittee. This Subcommittee was formed in 2006 to recommend criteria and standards for the management boards to consider in future allocation decisions. The Policy Board confirmed the membership of this Subcommittee and asked that they meet and provide an update on progress at the ASMFC Spring Meeting.

Staff presented draft “script” language to improve meeting efficiency and consistency. The “script” language dealt with the proxy voting on final actions taken by management boards and the participation of advisory panel chairs at board meetings. The Policy Board approved this script language for use by Board chairs in future meetings.

An update on Chesapeake Bay non-native oyster activities was presented to the Policy Board. The Executive Committee for the Oyster Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) met in December to reaffirm their commitment to delivery of the draft EIS by May or June 2007. The Executive Committee established an independent Oyster Advisory Panel to review the sufficiency of the science supporting the draft EIS prior to public release. In March, the Commission plans to have the Interstate Shellfish Transport Committee meet in conjunction with the Panel to begin the review of the early draft EIS.

The Policy Board approved all eleven nominations to the Commission’s Multispecies Technical Committee (MSTC). The MSTC is tasked with continuing the Commission’s progress towards multispecies model development. The Committee’s first meeting will take place on March 29, 2007, during the Commission’s Technical Committee Meeting Week.

Chris Bonzek, of the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, presented the results of the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program’s (NEAMAP) pilot nearshore trawl survey conducted in Fall 2006. The survey covered areas from Montauk, New York to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina and collected data on many important Commission-managed species. The Policy Board found the pilot survey to be a success and will be looking into ways to expand the current NEAMAP budget to support a full fall and spring Mid-Atlantic nearshore trawl survey. Mr. Bonzek, Jim Gartland (co-principal investigator), and Captain Jimmy Ruhle were acknowledged for the hard work that went into making the pilot survey a success.

In October 2006, the Commission’s Management and Science Committee (MSC) and Habitat Committee held joint seminar on impacts of energy development fishery resources. The goal of this seminar was to determine the most effective role for ASMFC to assist the states in the energy policy, development, permitting, and/or monitoring process. One of the most significant recommendations to come out of the

seminar was the approval to develop a source document to assist the states when commenting on proposed energy projects.

The Policy Board also approved the Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (CESS) recommendation to move forward with an economic study on the effects of horseshoe crab closures. The CESS was also tasked with a review of the Stripers Forever economic study on the commercial and recreational striped bass fisheries. The CESS will provide their input to the Policy Board during the Commission's May meeting week.

The Policy Board approved several documents: the Habitat Program's shellfish source document; the Habitat Program's Five-Year Strategic and Management Plan for 2007-2011.

For more information, please contact Robert Beal, Director, Interstate Fisheries Management Program, at (202)289-6400 or rbeal@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to approve the nomination as stated in the record to the Multi-species Technical Committee.
Motion made by Mr. Travelstead, second by Mr. Colvin. Motion carries.

Move to approve the Importance of Habitat Created by Molluscan Shellfish to Managed Species Along the Atlantic Coast of the United States as the Habitat source document.

Motion made by Mr. Colvin, second by Mr. P. White. Motion carries.

Move to approve the Habitat Program Five-Year Strategic and Management Plan for 2007-2011.

Motion made by Mr. P. White, second by Dr. Laney. Motion carries.