



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Striped bass issues to be investigated

by Capt. Ed Cook

R.I. Representative to ASMFC Striped Bass AP



Last Fall I attended an Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Striped Bass Advisory Panel meeting in Baltimore, MD. While we were in discussion of Addendum II that proposed the allowing of unused coastal commercial quota to be rolled over one year to the next, I not only voiced my opposition, but I felt we should be discussing more important concerns such as Mycobacteriosis disease, MRFSS Bias (errors) and poaching.



A lengthy and knowledgeable discussion by the panel of these and other subjects followed.

Much to my surprise, I recently received a copy of a memo dated November 20, 2009 sent by the Chair of the Striped Bass Board to the Technical Committee regarding a Task List. It read,

At its November Annual Meeting the Board had accepted the 2009 updated Stock Assessment. Based on this report and ensuing discussion the Board requests the TC to address the following five tasks and prepare a written response in time for the ASMFC Winter Meeting.

1. *If the Juvenile Abundance Index is lower than 75% of all the other values in the data set for three consecutive years then appropriate action should be recommended to the Board.*
2. *Provide information on the implications of mycobacteriosis to the stock. Inform the Board if the TC is already or plans to incorporate the effects of mycobacteriosis in stock assessments of striped bass.*

3. *Evaluate the effect of a potential overestimate in effort and recreational harvest estimates by MRFSS.*
4. *Inform why poaching estimates have not been included in stock assessments and what the likely bias is in assessment results from not including poaching estimates.*
5. *Evaluate the validity that there has been a possible shift of striped bass distribution into the EEZ resulting in a reason for the decline in availability in some states' waters.*

The Winter Meeting of the ASMFC is scheduled for early February and the Striped Bass Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 2.

The Agenda is almost entirely committed to the Technical Committee to respond to their assigned tasks. W. Laney and M. Howard will respond to the TASKS and there will be a presentation on Mycobacteriosis by three experts.

Also, if you haven't heard, Addendum II (allowing quota underage to be carried over from one year to the next) was defeated at the annual meeting back in November but, by only one vote.

Recreational fishing for striped bass in Rhode Island is not set for 2010 by DEM's Director Sullivan, but should continue status quo.

Public hearing on many fisheries regulation changes scheduled

RIDEM will conduct a public hearing on a number of proposed fishery regulation changes. The hearing will be held:

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23 • 6:00 PM
at URI Bay Campus, Corless Auditorium
South Ferry Rd, Narragansett, RI

Public comment will be solicited on the following proposals:

1. To continue/expand/modify the summer flounder sector allocation program in 2010
2. Changes to the **Recreational Summer Flounder** Management Plan
3. Changes to the **Recreational Scup** Management Plan
4. Changes to the Commercial Floating Fish Trap Scup Management Plan
5. Changes to the Commercial Tautog Management Plan
6. Changes to the **Recreational Tautog** Management Plan

7. Changes to the **Recreational Black Sea Bass** Management Plan
8. Changes to the Narragansett Bay Menhaden Management Plan
9. Changes to the General Category Commercial Striped Bass Management Plan
10. Changes to the Floating Fish Trap Commercial Striped Bass Management Plan
11. Changes to the **Recreational Striped Bass** Management Plan
12. Changes to the Winter Flounder Management Plan
13. Changes to the **Weakfish** Management Plan

A copy of the proposed regulations is available online at the DEM website at the following address:

<http://www.dem.ri.gov/topics/mftopics.htm>