

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment Subcommittee Conference Call Summary

June 15, 2012

Attendance

SAS – Micah Dean, Behzad Mahmoudi, Jeff Brust, Erik Williams, Alexei Sharov, Matt Cieri, Amy Schueller, Joe Smith

ASMFC – Mike Waive, Genny Nesslage, Toni Kerns

Public – Bill Goldsborough, Shaun Gehan, Judd Crawford, Pete Jensen, Ken Hinman

Biological Reference Points

- Erik – have heard from Genny & Alexei on reference point language, but want to hear from others for a clear consensus
- Erik – issue on the table: current F reference points don't match old biomass reference points, we need to explain the issue to the board
- Behzad – we also need to question whether F15% as a proxy for MSY is scientifically appropriate
- Erik – if we are silent on F15% as a suitable proxy in this report, it will be perceived as an implicit endorsement. If we have a problem with it, we should say so here
- Behzad – we (as the TC) have been involved in the development of the new BRPs for a year now. Do we have the time to fully discuss an appropriate reference point now?
- Genny – this committee was tasked with developing a new MSP-based F reference point... wasn't directed to develop a new biomass reference point, but at last board meeting it was identified that the biomass reference point should correspond with the new F reference point
- Behzad – Don't we have a joint group tasked with developing new reference points for menhaden?
- Alexei – on a TC conf call last year, we all were included in the discussion of the pros and cons of the reference point options.
- Behzad – is there a report from that call?
- Alexei – yes, see the ASMFC website
- Genny – this seems off topic, we need to come up with a current reference point, not solve the ecological reference point issue
- Alexei – we provided projections and calculations of the reference point options, and the board selected F15% and F30%. At the time, no one objected to the choice of these reference points... although there were no explicit approval of the selections. It would be awkward to now put in a report that we are uncomfortable with the new reference point.

(7)

- Behzad – this information will come up in the benchmark process anyway

Projections

- Erik – are we OK with the projection paragraph?
- Alexei – this paragraph has a very negative connotation...that we're basically saying that the projections cannot be used.
- Matt – disagree. Everything in the paragraph is the truth
- Alexei – *[question to group]*: With respect to projection results, do you find them useable for management right now?
- Erik/Amy/Matt/Behzad – no
- Behzad – are there any couple of years in the last 10 years that are unbiased enough to be used for projection?
- Alexei – the bias is unimportant here. We simulate the population dynamics at various constant landings scenarios...the projection outcomes will remain relatively unaffected, regardless of the bias. I don't remember anyone seriously objecting to the projections as they were being developed. Keep in mind we've presented projection results twice now. Regardless of the bias, the level of increase is relatively large for relatively low levels of removals.
- Matt- but recruitment is also affected
- Alexei – not in the way we've specified recruitment
- Alexei – if we don't have trust in the projections, we should just say it
- Behzad – but do we really want to use these projections to set hard TAC?
- Erik – that's the key problem...these projections are subject to all the problems we've identified with the assessment model.
- Toni – *[question to group]*: do you think these projections are giving you accurate probability levels of achieving the reference points?
- Matt/Erik - No
- Matt – I don't believe we can put forward with any certainty a particular probability level of achieving the reference points.
- Alexei – believes we are being dishonest by saying that we don't believe our projections now, after we've spent the last year developing them
- Erik – we only had strong concerns with these projections after we discovered the major issues identified in this update
- Toni – these issues aren't deal breakers for using projections from an assessment with retrospective bias in other fisheries (e.g. fluke)
- Erik – the difference here is that we can't address the bias at this point, just describe the issues we've uncovered