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May 8, 2018

MEMORANDUM

TO: Marine Fisheries Commission
FROM: Chris Batsavage
SUBJECT: Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Meeting (April 30—May 3, 2018)

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission met April 30—May 3, 2018 in Arlington, Virginia. Attached is the meeting summary compiled by commission staff which includes a summary of each of the species management board meetings and motions, as well as associated press releases.

Items that may be of particular interest include:

- **Summer Flounder:** The Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council approved a joint Summer Flounder Commercial Issues Amendment Public Hearing Document for public comment. This action proposes potential modifications to the commercial summer flounder fishery such as federal moratorium permit requalification criteria and state quota allocations. The amendment also considers changes to the existing fishery management plan objectives for summer flounder. Public hearings will occur this summer and the board and council will consider final action on this amendment in December.
- **Bluefish:** The Bluefish Management Board and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council approved a scoping and public hearing document for a joint Bluefish Fishery Management Plan Amendment that focuses on allocation and updates to the existing fishery management plan objectives. Scoping is the first and best opportunity for members of the public to raise concerns related to the scope of issues that will be considered. Public scoping hearings will occur from mid-June through mid-July.
- **Atlantic Menhaden:** The Atlantic Menhaden Management Board approved the Terms of Reference for the 2019 Atlantic menhaden single-species and ecosystem-based benchmark stock assessments and peer-reviews, and approved Stock Assessment Subcommittee membership which will conduct the single-species benchmark. The board also initiated a noncompliance finding in response to the Commonwealth of Virginia's failure to implement the 51,000-metric ton Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery cap, which is a mandatory provision of Amendment 3 to the Atlantic Menhaden Fishery Management Plan. The board postponed action on the noncompliance finding until the commission's Summer Meeting in August 2018, but the board has requested the commission send a letter to the Commonwealth of Virginia stating its intent to consider the noncompliance finding in August if the Commonwealth has not implemented Amendment 3's Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery cap.
- **Spot and Atlantic Croaker:** The South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board revisited its discussion regarding the revised traffic light analyses for spot and Atlantic croaker. The revised analyses

address the conflicting trends in abundance and harvest by examining adult and juvenile abundance separately and developing regional analyses. In addition, the triggering criteria for management action was revised for both species. The board postponed a motion to initiate an addendum that would incorporate these adjustments until the Summer 2018 Meeting, when the traffic light analyses for the 2017 fishing year will be reviewed.

- Cobia: The South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board reviewed draft Terms of Reference and a preliminary schedule for the benchmark stock assessment process, which is scheduled to begin in fall of 2018. The South Atlantic Fishery Management Council will approve the Terms of Reference and schedule at its June 2018 meeting. The board also initiated an amendment to the Atlantic Cobia Fishery Management Plan that will reflect the removal of Atlantic cobia from the joint South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council Coastal Migratory Pelagics Fishery Management Plan and establish recommendations for measures in federal waters. If Atlantic cobia (NY-GA) are removed from the federal fishery management plan, then the commission will request management measures to be implemented by NOAA Fisheries in federal waters.