

Maryland
Virginia
North Carolina

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2001 Tidewater AFS EXCOM

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President's Message

Good to be back in the saddle. It's time to really think about the national AFS meeting next August. The Tidewater Chapter has committed to help Maryland DNR with two parts of the meeting, student coordination and the Skinner Raffle. Mike Luisi, a new member of both the Chapter and MDDNR is handling student coordination and has insight as a recent student and as an observer at Phoenix. Students can get a break on registration by working at the meeting, so this is a great way to cut your travel costs.

Members can beat the bushes for raffle items. I've seen fish oriented artwork and jewelry, books, fishing gear and trips, clothes, boats, etc donated in past meetings. Obtaining items for this raffle is something every member of the Chapter can contribute to.

The ECU Student Chapter has taken the initiative for designing a t-shirt for the Chapter to sell as a fund-raiser based on the meeting poster and has some really sharp looking proposals. Kudos to them for taking this on.

I am the Tidewater Chapter - DNR coordinator for the national AFS meeting, so if you have any questions about something meeting related, let me know and I'll see what I can find out.

This national meeting is also an opportunity to present a talk or a poster. Our Chapter's next annual meeting is a great place to rehearse your national AFS talk.

On another note, thanks again to the Chapter for the gift certificate. I will need a good book to read after my second (and final, I hope) surgery. For about the first month of recovery my main activities consisted of reading and watching Japanese beetles go into Bag-a-Bug traps. It will be too cold in November for watching beetles. Many thanks to all who took the time to send

an e-mail or card. You don't really think these things mean much, but they really did to me while I was recovering. Just further confirmation that a great bunch of folks are in the Tidewater Chapter.

— Jim Uphoff

Treasurer's Report

Savings Account:

End of September Balance: \$2,005.45

Checking Account:

End of June Balance: \$3,043.92

Treasurer's Note:

There has been little financial activity since the last report as is typical of this time of year. Since the last report, the Chapter's savings account earned \$6.18 in interest. The Chapter spent \$27.05 out of the checking account for a card and gift for Jim Uphoff during his illness this past summer. The Chapter was also charged \$4.00 in service charges on its checking account. The Chapter wishes to thank Anthony Overton of University of Maryland Eastern Shore for his donation of computer fishing games that was included in the gift for Jim Uphoff.

-- Bill Rodney

Tidewater EXCOM Meeting

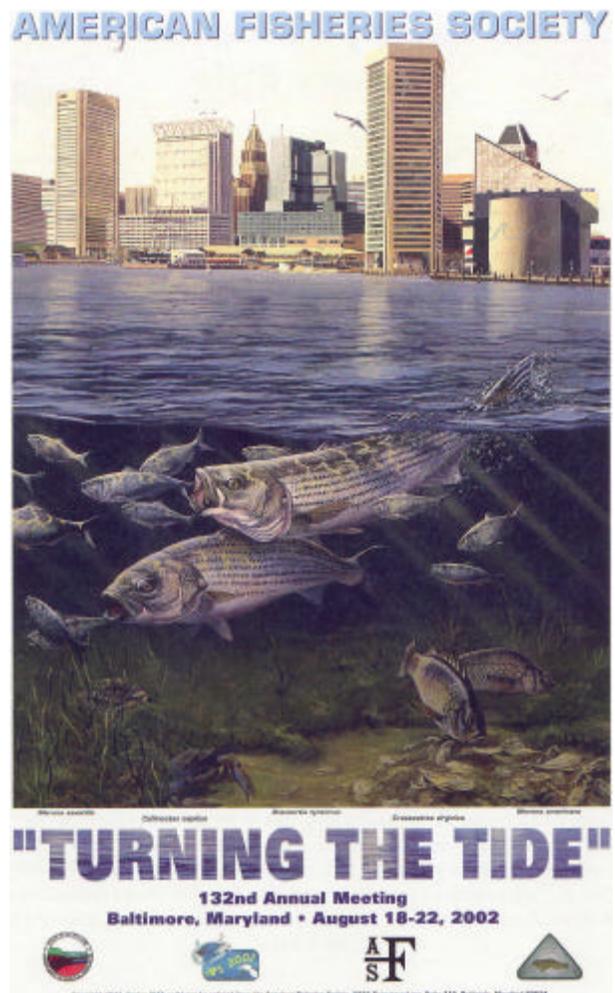
The next EXCOM meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2001 at 11:00 AM in the Virginia Institute of Marine Science's Fisheries Laboratory conference room. Most business will revolve around next year's national AFS meeting in Baltimore. The Tidewater Chapter has taken on the Skinner Raffle and student coordination and this meeting will be a good opportunity to see where we stand. Steve Jordan, of Maryland's Sarbanes Cooperative Oxford Laboratory, has requested the chapter's aid in sponsoring a symposium entitled *Bays, sounds, gulfs, lagoons: estuarine fisheries in the 21st century*. Dr. Jordan will provide a brief overview of the symposium and what we can do to help. I, with George Sackett's notes, will provide an update on the overall progress of the arrangements for Baltimore. It's getting near time for the chapter to finalize its decision on T-shirt sales for Baltimore, and if we think it's a good idea, we need to decide on a design. As for non-Baltimore agenda items, we need to revisit the issue of membership and dues - specifically, how do we treat someone who wants to join, but doesn't attend the annual meeting. This wasn't resolved at our last

EXCOM in March. And finally, we need to consider a request from the Equal Opportunities Section of AFS for an annual \$100-\$500 contribution to send students from under represented groups to the AFS national meeting. None of this should be difficult as long as John Olney plies us with good barbecue. You will need to buy or bring yourself a drink though (VIMS has soda machines).

--Jim Uphoff

Update on the Parent Society 2002 Meeting, Baltimore

Native Maryland artist Chris White completed original artwork for the meeting poster. Chris has won several national wildlife art and state (including Maryland) stamp competitions, and donated his time and materials to produce this painting, fitting us into his busy schedule to meet our deadline.



The new AFS poster for the Baltimore meeting in August 2002 features the Baltimore skyline and important estuarine critters including blue crab, oyster, white perch, Atlantic menhaden, and striped bass.

The Proposed Calendar for future AFS 2002 Planning Meetings is –

2001 --	2002 --	
Aug 2	Feb 7	Jun 6
Oct 4	Mar 7	Jul 11
Dec 6	Apr 4	Aug 1
	May 2	

Please volunteer to help with this important event. Contact George Sackett, General Chair, at gsackett@dnr.state.md.us.

Baltimore T-shirt Sales

The East Carolina University Student Subunit will take on the challenge of designing, printing, and selling the “official” AFS 2002 T-shirt. Several rough designs for the large print on the shirt back incorporate the AFS 2002 meeting poster. The Tidewater EXCOM will make the final decision on the T-shirt design at its October meeting. The ECU subunit and the Chapter will share the proceeds. Kudos to the ECU-AFS students for taking on this aspect of the Baltimore 2002 meeting.

The front of the shirt will have a variation of this logo, which appeared on the AFS 2002 Committee red polo shirts at the recent AFS 2001 meeting in Phoenix:



News from Student Subunits

Maryland – (<http://tortoise.hpl.umces.edu/~AFSST/>).

On September 25 of this year, a tornado touched down in the center of The University of Maryland’s College Park Campus. Two sisters were killed on campus when their car was thrown 300 yards by wind that reached more than 200 mph. A volunteer firefighter also died after assisting with rescue efforts. Luckily no others were killed. The lab of James Salierno, a UMD AFS subunit member, sustained minimal damage. Jim says, “All of the fish facilities and labs on campus were spared. However, my building took a direct hit, but the damage to my facility was minimal. Dr. Woods’ new aquaculture facility (which is under construction) got slightly banged up, lost a few tanks and piping. But other than that, the tornado spared all of the researchers and all of my

menhaden, which was amazing considering the emergency backup systems crashed and the fish were without flow for 5 hours and temperature control for 2 days (the temperature would fluctuate from 21-28 C degrees every day).”

-- Anthony Overton (Subunit President)

East Carolina University – (<http://www.ecu.edu/org/afs>)

The fall semester is off to a great start here at ECU. Once again we collaborated with Pitt County Solid Waste to help in the nationwide project, “Big Sweep”. This was a record –breaking year with almost 200 people volunteering, 60 of which were ECU faculty, staff, and students. On September 15 everyone donned hip-boots and chest-waders and picked up over 7000 pounds of trash from the Tar River and its tributaries. Of special interest to ECU folks is Greenmill Run, a tributary through the middle of campus and a favorite outdoor site for fisheries and water quality labs. Thirty-five students were directly involved in this effort. A pizza party and raffle followed the event, and everyone had a great, if not muddy, time.



The ECU-AFS Greenmill Run crew and their haul.

Our Subunit is also working with a local fraternity to label the storm drains in Greenville so citizens are aware what is dumped into these drains goes directly to the Tar River. Our most exciting project this year however, may be the task of selling t-shirts at the Baltimore meeting in 2002. The ECU-AFS Student Subunit is working in concert with the Tidewater Chapter to design, produce, and sell t-shirts at next year’s annual meeting. We’ve got lots of great ideas for a design, so be on the lookout for some really cool shirts next year. We are also gearing up for our own annual meeting, slated for November 30, 2001. We are planning a pig-pickin with all the fixings and a raffle with lots of door prizes. We

will also be displaying member research projects. Our Subunit was really pleased to have two outstanding speakers so far this semester. Dr. Joe Hightower from NC State talked to us about restoration of anadromous fish habitat through dam removal, and Dr. Richard Noble, also from NC State, gave a presentation on life history characteristics of largemouth bass in Puerto Rico reservoirs. If you would like to find out more about the ECU-AFS Subunit, check out our website @ www.ecu.edu/org/afs.

-- Charlton Godwin (Subunit President)

News from Maryland

September 11, 2001 began as a normal day in the field, and ended with the world turned upside down. DNR biologists Eric Durell, Craig Weedon, Beth Rodgers, and myself were seining for juvenile striped bass in a remote area of the upper Chesapeake Bay. Since we were on the water by 7:30 AM and had no radios or cell phones turned on in our 18 foot skiff, we had no idea that the country was under terrorist attack. We returned to the boat ramp at 3 pm, where a man said "Do you have any idea what is going on today?". We said "no". He said, "When you get in your van, turn on the damn radio". At the boat ramp parking lot, we stood around the van in shocked silence, listening to the reports rolling in from New York and Washington. We learned that the DNR building in Annapolis and the State Capitol was evacuated, and several roads were closed. The governor had declared a state of emergency in Maryland and was moved to an emergency operations center outside of Annapolis. We were now southbound on I-95, just north of Baltimore, wondering if we would be able to get home. We observed two NYC taxi cabs racing southbound and another one broken down with a flat tire. Fortunately, the Baltimore tunnels were open. Then, just north of Annapolis on I-97, an electronic highway sign announced: "Major incident in Washington D.C., please avoid the area". Luckily, we were able to get back to the DNR parking lot, park the boat, and get our vehicles.

Once home, my thoughts drifted back to old friends and family in New York. The twin towers are gone? As a transplanted Long Islander, I have a friend who works at the trade center and several friends in the New York city police and fire departments. After several phone calls, I eventually determined that all my family and friends were fine. Unfortunately, I later learned that my father lost a friend at the trade center and two volunteer firefighters from my hometown of Dix Hills, NY were missing. My thoughts and prayers go out to the families of the victims. I am also proud of the heroes of NYPD and FDNY. - Erik Z.

In the wake of the attacks in New York and Virginia, Governor Glendening closed all state office buildings on September 11 to ensure the safety of our state work force. And, as law enforcement agencies around the country and around the world went on alert, the officers of the Maryland Natural Resources Police and State Forest and Park Service also went into action.

Here at Tawes, SFPS/NRP joint Communications Center staff remained in the building -- with a contingency plan for moving operations off-site if necessary -- under the leadership of Assistant Secretary Jim Dunmyer, and on site duty officers from each agency. DGS police and guards also remained on site, while Secretary Fox was transported to Maryland Emergency Management Administration headquarters at Camp Fretterd, where he joined Governor Glendening, Lt. Governor Townsend and other key cabinet officials in monitoring the situation.

The Natural Resource Police, in cooperation with other federal and state agencies, set up Maryland's first line of defense off-shore, securing waterways at or around: the U.S. Naval Academy, the Patuxent River Naval Air Station, Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant, the Baltimore Inner Harbor, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and other major area bridges that cross the Potomac and Susquehanna Rivers.

On land, SFPS Rangers also went on high alert; all state parks were kept open, with the exception of the Cunningham Falls Day Use Area, which was closed in cooperation with federal officials in light of its proximity to Camp David.

Fisheries news from MDDNR:

Staff applied for a grant from Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) to investigate an electronic reporting system for the commercial striped bass fishery.

Staff began preliminary planning to prioritize targeted geographic areas of underutilized recreational fisheries for promotion as part of a WCRP Grant. Outreach staff are coordinating with Freshwater Division Regional managers and Nature and Tourism staff to prioritize those areas that will be promoted under the Grant.

Staff is working to coordinate the stocking of a 200,000 gallon aquarium display at the new Bass Pro Shops megastore in Arundel Mills Mall. Collections began to supply eleven species of Chesapeake Bay fish for the display tank. The fish are being acclimated to captivity and lower salinity at Oxford. Creation of an information kiosk is also being developed. The kiosk will provide access to the DNR website and also have pouches for

hard copy handouts of Fisheries most popular printed materials.

Eel Project personnel analyzed Maryland commercial landings and effort data to determine its suitability for the evaluation of stock status. Catch per unit effort was virtually constant for the 1990's, the only years when reliable effort data was available. We are continuing to investigate use of Maryland, Virginia and Potomac River eel data to construct a statistically robust analysis using a biomass dynamic model.

Carp were collected from the Patuxent River for a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service project. This study will focus on various compounds found in the tissues of Pocomoke River fish which may be related to poultry manure runoff. The Patuxent fish are being used as controls.

Potomac River commercial pound nets in August produced fewer flounder from the previous month. Menhaden length data was collected from fish houses, and tautog operculum samples were taken from oceanside specimens.

The effect of five separate management scenarios on the five-year projection of tautog biomass was prepared for the ASMFC tautog meeting. Additionally, four separate strategies for controlling recreational fishing effort were reviewed and submitted to the Tautog Technical Committee for approval.

The final version of the report, General Life History and Spawning Locations for Anadromous and Estuarine Fish Species in the Maryland Portion of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed is being drafted. The report summarizes 19 years of herring, shad, and perch data. A poster version of this report was presented at the Tidewater annual meeting in Easton back in April.

The Fish Lesion Monitoring Project continued to use both cast nets and seines to monitor fish health in Maryland's tidal waters. Ulcerated juvenile Atlantic menhaden were collected from Back Creek, a tributary of the Manokin River, during several monitoring visits. Several of the ulcerated fish have been submitted for laboratory analysis and the results are pending. To date, all other finfish species collected in the area have been healthy. Both juvenile striped bass and juvenile white perch have been abundant in all rivers sampled.

Biologists of the FWHP have tagged 7 sea turtles (6 loggerheads, 1 Kemp's ridley) since July as part of a new sea turtle tagging and health assessment study being conducted in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay. Turtles incidentally captured in pound nets are weighed, measured, bled, biopsied for genetics, tagged, and released. Over time, the collection of this data will provide vital information on habitat utilization, migratory behavior, age, growth, baseline health, sex, and

geographical origin of sea turtles in the Chesapeake Bay. This information has important implications for the development of management and conservation strategies for endangered and threatened sea turtles.

SHELLFISH DIVISION

- Shellfish Division and our oyster partners met with Congressional staff and the Army Corps to discuss the delay with the 2001 Army Corps Oyster Restoration Project.

- Shellfish Division met with the various oyster partners from Maryland and Virginia to discuss and develop the new Comprehensive Baywide Oyster Plan.

- Shell planting finished up for the season, a total of 3,128,652 bushels were planted. After finishing our program Langenfelder moved the shell dredge down to Virginia to begin Virginia's new shell dredging program.

- Shellfish Division tested a new shell cleaning process and cleaned 172 acres at 7 sites. The sites will be evaluated later in the year for spat set.

- Shellfish staff attended public hearings for the closing of oyster sanctuaries and reserves in various areas around the Bay. The hearing schedule is coming to a close and when it is over, DNR will have 24 sanctuaries and 19 reserves.

- Shellfish Division made shell plantings in the Magothy River and Severn River sanctuary areas in conjunction with local community groups and other oyster partners, and a planting in Herring Bay with the DNR Tributary Team that will be considered for sanctuary status.

-- Erik Zlokovitz

News from Virginia

The Chickahominy River in Virginia is a major tidal tributary of the James River that historically has supported an outstanding trophy largemouth bass fishery. However, recent angler reports of a "decline" in the fishery prompted biologists Dean Fowler and Bob Greenlee (VDGIF) to conduct a late fall, 2000 (October - November) electrofishing survey on the Chickahominy and other major tributaries of the tidal James. Their findings - only a few bass collected during extensive boat electrofishing - supported the angler's claims. In the Chickahominy, largemouth CPUE was substantially lower in fall of 2000 than in fall of 1994 - the most recent year available for comparison. This spring, extensive boat electrofishing was conducted throughout the system, and these results indicated system-wide declines in largemouth bass abundance in the tidal James and Chickahominy rivers. 2000 year-class

largemouth were almost non-existent, and the 1999 year-class was much weaker than earlier cohorts. Further studies and surveys are planned to evaluate the possible causes of these declines, including habitat alteration, viral pathogens, and interactions with introduced fishes. One interesting note related to the August, 2001 sampling - only 2 YOY bass were collected in over 5 h of electrofishing effort on the lower Chickahominy and its tributaries. However, YOY were relatively abundant in samples from the upper 1/3 of the system.

VDGIF biologists conducted a second year of exploratory sampling for large, nonindigenous catfishes (e.g. blue catfish and flathead catfish) using low & high frequency boat electrofishing in the Rappahannock River. The results of high frequency sampling indicate that, in the Rappahannock, there are an abundance of large blue catfish (although generally < 30lb. in our samples) that are associated with shoreline structure, such as downed trees, adjacent to sharp channel drop-offs. While we did not see many of the 30 - 50 lb. blue cats in the Rappahannock that are so abundant in samples from the James, we did pickup the largest blue catfish (60 lb.) of the year above Port Royal, Virginia. A related sampling effort (July 2001) on the tidal Potomac River included biologists from VDGIF, Maryland DNR, and Virginia Commonwealth University and collected substantial numbers of adult blue catfish up to 30 pounds. This was the first quantitative sampling conducted for recently established and/or expanded blue catfish populations in the tidal Potomac river. The survey was prompted by commercial anglers complaints about this species in the middle and lower Potomac.

-- Greg Garman

News from North Carolina

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) is still negotiating terms for the relicensing of the dams on the Roanoke River with Dominion Generation. One of the conditions is that Dominion Generation fund a 10-20 year stocking program for American shad. This program would be an extension of research first funded by the North Carolina Division of Transportation (NCDOT). NCDOT funded research indicated that spawning American shad in aquaculture by hormone injection is viable method for fry production, which has varying success in some hatcheries. During 1998, the NCWRC Watha Hatchery and the U. S. Fish & Wildlife National Hatchery in Edenton produced 2.1 million fry for stocking into the Roanoke River.

In the developing stages for the NCWRC is the initiation of a largemouth bass stocking program in the coastal rivers of North Carolina, especially that of the Chowan

and Cape Fear Rivers. NCWRC personnel plan to track the success, literally with coded wire tags, of stocked fish when the program is implemented hopefully next spring. NCWRC and other regulatory agencies are also looking into alternatives for fish passage over or around Lock and Dam #1 on the Cape Fear River. One alternative that seems to be favorable to NCWRC is to build or dig a 20ft wide x 5ft deep bypass channel around the lock and dam structure.

In marine fisheries news, the Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) has declared the weakfish "stock" viable again. Weakfish or gray trout have been in a recovery status since the early 1990s. The success of this species to regain its viable status was accredited to the weakfish fishery management plan (FMP). Division of Marine Fisheries Director Preston Pate quoted, "The take-home message here is, FMPs work". Other commercially important species improving in part from FMPs this year were red drum and summer flounder. While these fisheries are improving but still listed as recovering, some landings of other commercially important fish were down this year. Blue crab landings were down 46% in the Neuse River and Pamlico Sound. The reduction in catch is unknown, but is speculated to be related to the 1999 hurricane Floyd. Striped mullet and croakers are still listed as concerns, though croaker populations are still abundant in the ocean, inland there are relatively sparse.

That's about it for the North Carolina News, in the upcoming issues look for reports on student research from NCSU, ECU, or UNCW.

--Wesley Patrick



Laboratory Spotlight

NOAA's Center for Coastal Fisheries and Habitat Research

in Beaufort, NC is a joint facility with the National Ocean Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. The Fish Biology Team (aka Reef Fish Team) is part of NMFS and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center, Miami. We are located at 101 Pivers Island Road, Beaufort, NC 28516. The Team consists of eleven full time permanent employees, one seasonal employee, one NMFS Miami Laboratory employee, and five contract positions:

Dr. Charles S. Manooch, III -	Team Leader
R. O. "Pete" Parker -	Research Fishery Biologist, NOAA Dive Master
Robert Dixon -	Research Fishery Biologist
Michael Burton -	Research Fishery Biologist

Jennifer Potts -	Research Fishery Biologist
Kenneth Brennan -	Biological Technician, Port Sampler, Beaufort, NC
Peggy Willis -	Statistical Assistant
Doug Piatkowski -	Biological Technician, Port Sampler, Wilmington, NC
Deborah Codella -	Biological Technician, Port Sampler, SC
Dan Theisen -	Biological Technician, Port Sampler, Northeast FL
Peggy Kirwin -	Biological Technician, Port Sampler, FL Keys
Dave Barteer -	Biological Technician, Port Sampler, Northwest FL
Kit Doncaster -	Fishery Reporting Specialist, Port Sampler, Southeast TX
5 Contract Positions	Port Samplers located in Southeast FL, Southwest FL, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Northeast TX

The Fish Biology Team conducts research that will enable the development of management options and strategies for sustainable fisheries resources along the southeastern United States. The team accomplishes these goals by conducting the Headboat Survey, laboratory studies on aspects of life history of various fish species, field studies including off-shore diving and fishing, fishery data analysis, and computer diagnostics for detecting and quantifying species distributions and abundance.

HEADBOAT SURVEY

The Headboat Survey began in 1972 in North Carolina and South Carolina. It has since been expanded to cover the entire southeastern U.S. coast including the Gulf of Mexico. Port agents stationed along the southeastern U.S. and Gulf of Mexico meet headboats as they return from fishing, and collect lengths, weights, and biological samples from fishes that were caught. In addition, agents collect daily catch records from the vessels' captains/crews that identify individual fishing days, number of anglers, and estimated numbers and weights of each species caught that day. These biological and catch data are used to report on total catch and effort for the two fleets, and provide samples used in life history studies and stock assessments. Robert Dixon currently manages the Headboat Survey that includes twelve (12) port samplers and one statistical clerk.



LIFE HISTORY STUDIES

Most of the laboratory research involve studies on age and growth of reef fish species. Since the mid-1970's, 29 fish species have been aged and reports published in peer reviewed journals. Numerous studies on reproduction and food habits of fish have been conducted. Personnel also work closely with university graduate students on life history studies, specifically students from East Carolina Univ., Univ. of NC - Wilmington, NC State Univ., and Duke Univ. Dr. Manooch leads the life history studies and is an adjunct professor. Jennifer Potts, Mike Burton, and Ken Brennan work closely with these studies.

OFFSHORE FIELD STUDIES

Field studies off Beaufort are conducted to document changes in species composition and abundance at selected reef fish habitats, and document changes as impacted by fishing and by environmental conditions. SCUBA and state of the art visual enumeration techniques are utilized. During the past several years, field studies such as these have provided information on the removal of predators, and on population structure following 15 years of intense fishing pressure. Future research efforts will also be directed at recruitment of juvenile reef fish to a site. Pete Parker heads the offshore studies and utilizes team divers Mike Burton, Robert Dixon, and Ken Brennan.



DATA ANALYSIS FOR FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCILS

Landings data from commercial, recreational, and headboat fisheries, as well as biological samples analyses, are used to prepare stock assessments. Personnel also prepare reports on trends in fishing and compliance rates to various fishery regulations as imposed by the fishery management councils. Jennifer Potts and Mike Burton have taken the lead on these reports.

FUTURE STUDIES

Computer Diagnostics of Fish Distributions: More than 25 years of headboat catch and effort data will be used along with GIS technology to map species abundance, catch rates, and fishing effort for major reef fish species. This will allow the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, as well as other fisheries managers, to identify essential fish habitat for reef fish resources. This is a new initiative which is planned over the next five years. Biologists also plan to identify and quantify important reef fish spawning aggregations off South Florida (Riley's Hump) and Dry Tortugas. Valuable information is collected on species diversity and community structure in these areas. Studies will provide the SAFMC and GMFMC with data on aggregating species when marine sanctuary or fishing reserve management options are considered for some areas. Mike Burton will be leading these studies.

Visual Assessment of Offshore Habitat:

SCUBA gear and underwater drop-cameras are being used to assess the Ten Fathom Ledge area off Beaufort Inlet, NC, for its suitability for marine protected area (MPA) designation. The 8x13 mile area was first proposed as a potential MPA site in 1986. Divers are conducting visual census transects to qualitatively and quantitatively describe the current fish communities of the area. One-half square meter habitat quadrat samples are also being taken to characterize the habitat along the transects. Species lists developed will be compared with historical species lists to determine if there are changes in the community structure. This is important in the light of recent findings relating global warming to community changes. Mike Burton and Pete Parker lead this research.

-Jennifer Potts

Announcements – 16th Annual Tidewater Chapter Meeting

The Tidewater and Virginia chapters of the AFS will co-host the upcoming annual meeting on February 6-8, 2002 in Virginia Beach at a site to be determined. More information and a "First Call for Papers" will be made available in the not too distant future. For more information, please contact President-Elect Alan Weaver at the phone or email listed at the front of the newsletter.

-- Alan Weaver