

Tidewater Press

Newsletter Of the Tidewater Chapter of the American Fisheries Society

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"The striped bass and bluefish cannot be far behind on their way back south."

Edited by Roger Rulifson and James Morris

Volume 22 Issue 3

President's Corner

I hope this fall edition of the Tidewater Press finds everyone doing well. Those of us at the northern edge of the Tidewater Chapter geographic range have even noticed a bit of chill in the air. Soon, with much reluctance the sandals will go back in the closet until next spring. Classes are fully underway, the leaves are starting to turn colors, and the mullet have begun their southward migration along the beaches. The striped bass and bluefish cannot be far behind on their way back south.

Speaking of migrations, it was with great pleasure that I saw so many "Tidewater Types" at the 137th meeting of the American Fisheries Society in San Francisco from September 2-6th. Presentations by both TWC students and pro-



fessionals were throughout the meeting including several on the last afternoon of the last day. The meeting itself was very large by anyone's standards. I think I spent the better part of an afternoon just strategizing where I needed to be throughout the week. Large national meetings really make you appreciate the benefits of our single-session TWC meetings. This year's meeting is being

hosted by Jack Musick at the Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences from March 6-8, 2008. Please make sure you block these days off on your calendar as it will undoubtedly be a great time.

Also, we are in need of officer nominations. Please contact Anthony Overton (overtona@mail.ecu.edu) or me for more information.

Regards,

--Dewayne Fox, Tidewater Chapter President 2007

22nd Tidewater Chapter Meeting, VIMS, Gloucester, VA, March 8-10, 2008

The 22nd Annual Meeting of the Tidewater Chapter is scheduled for Thursday, March 6, to Saturday, March 8, 2008 at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in Gloucester, Virginia. Rooms have been reserved at the Duke of York Motel in Yorktown, on the waterfront where there are also three pubs. Thursday

evening will be used for posters and social W/ heavy finger food (at VIMS). Friday will be oral presentations with a buffet and beer afterwards, probably in Yorktown across the street from the Motel. Saturday morning will be oral presentations, finishing at noon.



Duke of York Motel, Yorktown, VA



Secretary/ Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's Report

Checking: \$ 4491.15
Mutual Fund: \$ 1220.83
Total: \$ 5711.98.

The AFS Governing Board met in San Francisco on Saturday, Sept 1, and approved the bylaws for the ECU-AFS Student Sub-unit, which should be receiving a letter indicating this action from AFS Execu-

tive Director Gus Rassam sometime in the next few weeks. Upon receipt of the letter, the bylaws changes will be official. Two other submissions involving the Tidewater Chapter are either ready for March 2008 AFS mid-year meeting or are on hold:

Tidewater Chapter (Stephanie McInery) - adding subunits; need final bylaws and notice of members approval

* Virginia Institute of Marine

Science Student Sub-unit [College of William and Mary] (Sally Upton) - need bylaws, petition, officers list, Tidewater ExCom approval

Contact Gwen White, AFS Constitutional Consultant, if you have any questions or concerns about this list.

Gwen White, AFS Constitutional Consultant
 Phone 317-234-4407;
 FAX 317-232-8150

--Stephanie McInery, Tidewater Secretary/Treasurer

If you wish to nominate someone (including yourself) please contact Anthony Overton (overtona@ecu.edu) at 252-328-4121.

Nominations Committee

The Tidewater Chapter Nominating Committee is actively seeking nominations for the 2008 slate of officers, including President-elect, Secretary/Treasurer, and the Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina Members at Large. Nominees must be members of the American Fisheries Society and the Tidewater Chapter. If you wish to nomi-

nate someone (including yourself) please contact Anthony Overton (overtona@ecu.edu) at 252-328-4121. We hope to have at least two names per position on the ballot. Nominations will be open through December 31st. Ballots will be distributed through the Tidewater listserve and the election will close on January 15th

2008.

The elected 2008 officers will be installed during the Tidewater Chapter Business meeting Friday March 7, 2008 at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in Gloucester, Virginia

-- Anthony Overton, Past-President, Nominating Committee

Communications Committee

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If you are having difficulty with getting on the listserv, please contact me. Rulifsonr@ecu.edu.



Student Subunit News

University of Maryland By
Ryan Woodland

This summer and fall has provided a number of opportunities for members of the University of Maryland Subunit to present their work at forums around the country and abroad. Members Adam Peer and Lisa Kerr gave platform talks at the 2007 National AFS meeting in San Francisco, CA; Ryan Woodland presented a poster at the 2nd International Symposium on diadromous fishes in Halifax, N.S.; and Deanna McQuarrie, Lisa Kerr, and Ryan Woodland will be giving talks at the upcoming Estuarine Research Federation biennial meeting in Providence, RI in November. Besides these national forums, subunit members have remained very active in providing outreach to the local community and their peers within the department. At a recent open-house at the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, subunit members manned informational stations in their respective laboratories and fielded questions by visitors

while holding forth on their personal research and that of their research group. The more daring members volunteered with CBL's outreach staff teaching visiting children about Chesapeake Bay fauna and fisheries through activities such as fish printing, oyster tonging and showcasing a miniature oyster reef community. A pair of subunit members will be presenting material to their peers at the 2007 University of Maryland Marine, Estuarine and Environmental research colloquium on October 5th and 6th on population and metapopulation dynamics of white perch in Chesapeake Bay and modeling historical habitat quality for a federally endangered shortnose sturgeon population.

The Subunit is proud to organize a student-mentor lunch at the 2008 Tidewater meeting hosted by president-elect Jack Musick. We are in the initial stages of planning the event and will be sending out emails in the upcoming weeks to gauge interest and develop lists of interested students and

mentors. Established professionals from academia, government, NGOs or private industry are encouraged to volunteer as a host mentor for a student. Students will have the opportunity to sit down and chat with the mentor in a relaxed atmosphere that can provide students with valuable insight related to career paths and job requirements while expanding their collegial network. Mentors benefit by passing along the knowledge they've gained in the pursuit of their career while interacting with their future peers. Interested individuals should contact Ryan Woodland at woodland@cbl.umces.edu. More information will be forthcoming as the meeting approaches.

If you are interested in getting involved in the subunit, please contact me at:

woodland@cbl.umces.edu



Ryan Woodland, UMD

“Subunit members have remained very active in providing outreach to the local community and their peers within the department.”

A Pictorial Review of the AFS Meeting in San Francisco

(photos by R. Rulifson)



Mary Fabrizio is new AFS Pres!



Dewayne enjoying the social!



Go PIRATES!



“At the end of October, the subunit volunteered at a surf fishing tournament in Carolina Beach.”

Student Subunit News

UNC-W By Cassie Martin

The UNCW student subunit has had a busy start to the 2007-2008 academic year. In September, two students presented at the National AFS meeting in San Francisco. Will Smith (subunit past president) gave an oral presentation titled “Maturity and harvest mortality in the North Carolina southern flounder fishery: Tag return studies in the New and Neuse River, North Carolina”. Will received a Marine Fisheries section travel award for the amount of \$500. Cassie Martin (current president) presented a poster titled “Testing for demographic restructuring in age-0 juvenile red drum”. Cassie received a travel award from the Estuaries section in conjunction with the Southern Atlantic Marine Laboratories for the amount of \$500 as well.

The subunit welcomes new graduate students Joseph Facendola, Mike Waine, and Janie Mcauliffe. Joe was awarded a Blue Crab Sea-Grant to study the impacts of juvenile and sub-adult red drum predation on blue crabs. Mike will be studying anadromous fishes in the Cape Fear.

At UNCW, the subunit participated in the Fall Involvement Carnival to recruit new students. The August and September meetings boasted the highest attendance since the subunits

formation three semesters ago. Dr. Lankford (recipient of the Tidewater chapter’s Excellence in Fisheries Education Award) spoke at the September meeting about variable growth in Atlantic silversides along the eastern coast. The talk was informative as well as enjoyable. Our October speaker will be Richard Hall from NMFS talking about his work designing MPAs in Hawaii.



Will Smith in San Fran.

Through the UNCW student government association, the subunit was awarded special activities funding to send two students to the Tidewater chapter meeting in Gloucester, VA this spring. We hope to have an undergraduate present results from their honors project research at the chapter meeting. Last years recipient, Melissa Mitchell, appreciated the constructive reviews she received on her project. We feel this experience for an undergraduate is invaluable and will

promote future fisheries professionals.

At the end of October, the subunit is volunteering at a surf fishing tournament in Carolina Beach. We will be helping the tournament officials with the weigh-in and taking otolith and tissue samples for the Department of Marine Fisheries. The tournament benefits the Big Buddy Little Buddy charity.

If you would like to become involved in the UNCW subunit, please contact me at:

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University of North Carolina Wilmington
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Wilmington, NC 28405
crm7295@uncw.edu
910-962-3407



Student Subunit News

East Carolina University

By Jennifer Woodroffe

The fall semester has been busy for the ECU-AFS student subunit. We recently won the Student Subunit of the Year Award from the parent society in San Francisco for the second year in a row. We had six students representing us, each presented orally or via poster. Get-A-Clue was successful and we received a great deal of interest from the undergraduate students as well as forming relationships with the Ducks Unlimited chapter and The Coastal Society of ECU. We had approximately 40 students show up and participate in Big Sweep in October and we picked up several hundred pounds of trash from Green Mill Run. We are sending two members to ERF in Rhode Island to present their graduate research as well.

Future activities include our ninth Annual Banquet on November 30, 2007. Michael Street, Chief of the Habitat Protection Section of NC DMF, will be our guest speaker. Tickets are \$15. If you are interested in attending please contact ECU-AFS.

If you are interested in attending a meeting of the ECU-AFS, participating in a seminar or workshop, or presenting your research, please contact the student subunit!

We look forward to hearing from you!

Duke University

(a.k.a. DukeFish)

By Suzanne Blake

DukeFish has been very busy this semester! We kicked off the year with a beach clean up on our very own Piver's Island, home to the Duke University Marine Lab (DUML) and NOAA's Center for Coastal Fisheries and Marine Habitat Research. Over 40 people participated in the clean up, including Duke students from the Beaufort and Durham campuses, and staff from the DUML and NOAA. We collected over 1,000 pieces of trash. Groups also participated in a scavenger hunt during the clean up and stayed on the lookout for flags hidden throughout the island. Each flag held a question related to marine fisheries and the team that answered the most questions correctly received a prize. Teams were also awarded prizes for the most trash items collected (341 pieces) and the most unusual piece of trash collected from the day, which was a can of hair wax. All in all, it was a beautiful day with a great turn out and we left the island a cleaner place!

In October, DukeFish participated in several events including a Seafood Symposium on October 5, 2007. Over 50 students, faculty,

and community members gathered in Beaufort and Durham to discuss sustainable seafood. The symposium, entitled "Complete Seafood," brought together experts from diverse backgrounds to create a great dialogue on sustainability, including issues of human health, conservation, and economics. The six panelists included Timothy Fitzgerald, from Environmental Defense, who opened the symposium by providing an overview of the issues and highlighting the public health concerns surrounding mercury and PCB contamination in fish. Marty Smith, a fisheries economist at Duke University's Nicholas School, discussed the economic factors affecting sustainable seafood purchasing (and selling) practices. Conservation biologist Larry Crowder, from the DUML, detailed the problem of by-catch in many fisheries.

The next portion of the symposium focused on local sustainable seafood issues. Kelly Murthrey, owner of Piccata's Restaurant in Morehead City, talked about his restaurant's choice to sell only local seafood. Our own Elia Herman (DukeFish President) followed with the results of a seafood survey that she, Suzanne Blake (DukeFish Secretary), and several other graduate students conducted in the Spring of 2007 about North Carolina Seafood restaurants. The



ECU-AFS President

Jennifer Woodroffe

"ECU-AFS and DukeFish have been very busy this semester!"



Beach Clean up: Volunteers at the Pivers Island Beach



DukeFish president
Suzanne Blake

“David Tucker, a retailer from Blue Ocean Market in Morehead City, who discussed his current practices and the obstacles he faces in selling local, sustainable seafood.”



Crowds at the DukeFish Seafood Festival Shrimp Booth.

Student Subunit News

symposium wrapped up with David Tucker, a retailer from Blue Ocean Market in Morehead City, who discussed his current practices and the obstacles he faces in selling local, sustainable seafood. The event, co-sponsored by DukeFish, was a great success!

One day after the Seafood Symposium, DukeFish participated in the 21st annual North Carolina Seafood Festival in Morehead City, NC over the weekend of October 5-7, 2007. DukeFish joined forces with the Duke student chapter of The Coastal Society and sold over 1,000 grilled shrimp kabobs at the Seafood Festival. The planning for this event began months ago, when we contacted a local seafood supplier about purchasing sustainable shrimp for the event. We succeeded in purchasing about 140 pounds of sustainable, channel-caught shrimp locally caught in Pamlico Sound from Fish-Towne in Beaufort, NC. Channel-net shrimping uses fixed-gear nets in channels where tides bring the shrimp to the net. Shrimp of all sizes are caught and brought aboard in almost perfect condition. The channel-net method results in less bycatch than other shrimping methods, such as trawling, and uses less fuel because the fishing boats remain stationary while catching the shrimp. After peeling, de-heading, ka-

bobing, and grilling the shrimp, we sold the kabobs to Seafood Festival patrons as an alternative to the typical fried seafood at the festival, which contributed to our selling success! We also flew a flag on our booth to signify our locally caught seafood and handed out information about the sustainable shrimp and Seafood Watch cards to our patrons. Business boomed, and in the end we netted nearly \$1,000 for DukeFish. We will donate a portion of these proceeds to Carteret Catch, a Carteret County, NC organization dedicated to promoting “fresh, local seafood landed by resident commercial fishermen.” The event was a HUGE success and we could not have done it without all of the volunteers from DUML and Duke’s Durham campus who helped us tremendously throughout the past few months and during the weekend of the Seafood Festival.

all in preparation for future fishing trips.

Overall, DukeFish’s inaugural year has been a huge success! We thank everyone who has helped out with all of our events and projects and we are looking forward to the many more we have planned for next semester.

We also sent some of our officers to Duke’s Durham campus on October 16,

2007 for Duke University’s annual Earth Jam festival. Earth Jam has the feel of a fall Earth Day with the main goal of recruiting students to pursue environmental studies. We brought out our sustainable fishing game (used in April at Duke’s Earth Day festival) and Seafood Watch cards to educate passing students. Several students showed great interest in our table and even joined DukeFish. Many of these new members will contribute to our Durham initiative, working with Caitlin Luderer, our Durham liaison, to pursue DukeFish activities inland.

Finally, our semester would not be complete without some fun, and of course fishing! Several DukeFish members have purchased North Carolina fishing licenses and plans for fishing trips are in the works. Our own Stu Brown (Treasurer) also hosted a fly fishing lesson at DUML, focusing on the basics of casting and a variety of salt-water fly-fishing techniques, all in preparation for future fishing trips.



State Reports

Maryland News

from Bob Murphy

Yellow Perch in the News (again)

A fish so common anglers once called it "the people's fish" has inspired years of fiery debate between recreational and professional fishermen, and now Maryland authorities are planning to step into the fray over yellow perch. The state's Fisheries Service had a hearing on September 25 to listen to the dueling anglers over the yellow perch.

Recreational fishermen complain that yellow perch are being hogged by professionals, who use large hoop nets to scoop up perch in the late winter and early spring as the fish head up Maryland's tributaries to spawn. The harvesting advocates counter that the yellow perch stock is healthy and that more limits on yellow perch will add another restriction to an already-troubled industry. "It has nothing to do with how healthy the stock is, but who gets it," said Larry Simns, head of the Maryland Watermen's Association.

The yellow perch debate goes back years. Recreational fishermen have long pushed for limits on commercial fishing, while the state Department of Natural Resources tried to negotiate a middle ground. The conflict grew heated last year, when DNR's Fisheries Service suggested lifting an

18-year-old moratorium on commercial fishing of yellow perch in two Eastern Shore rivers, the Choptank and the Nanticoke (see TCN vol 21 [1]). Recreational anglers loudly opposed the change, saying those rivers are one of the few places left where recreational fishermen have a fair shot at getting yellow perch.

After a deluge of complaints from recreational fishermen about the Eastern Shore proposal, DNR backed off the idea and kept the Choptank and Nanticoke off-limits to the professionals. Fearing still more attempts to help commercial fishermen, the recreational anglers lobbied for a new law passed this year requiring DNR to curb the commercial harvest of yellow perch. The law requires DNR to protect yellow perch migration to "historical spawning rivers and streams," directing DNR to prohibit commercial fishermen from scooping up too many perch before hobbyists get a chance to catch them.

The yellow perch commercial business is relatively small. Last year, 23,752 pounds of yellow perch with a value of \$39,666 were harvested during January, February and March. Simns said fewer than 100 people catch yellow perch for sale.

Yellow perch isn't very popular on Maryland menus, so much of the harvest heads to the Great Lakes

region, where yellow perch is commonly served at fish fries or on fried-fish sandwiches. Recreational anglers say it's wrong to ship Chesapeake-regional fish to the Midwest for consumption. Further, recreational fishermen say the yellow perch still hasn't rebounded to its historic levels after the population dipped in the 1970s.

Howard King, head of the Maryland Fisheries Service, said tensions are high on both sides. But the tide is turning against commercial fishing. The watermen will have to adjust to tighter regulations as their recreational rivals assert more influence. "It seems as though they're constantly being ratcheted back, but they're competing for a limited resource and the world is changing," King said.

Striped bass index up from last year

The annual census of juvenile striped bass shows a slightly above average number of young-of-year state fisheries officials announced. A preliminary reading of the YOY survey, conducted by the DNR, shows a reproduction index in the range of 13 to 15, above the 54-year average of 12. Last year, the index was 4.3. "It's not a dominant year class, but this class on top of other dominant year classes ensures fish will be in the pipeline for years to come," said Howard King, DNR's Fisheries Service



Bob Murphy
MD Member-at-Large

"Recreational anglers say it's wrong to ship Chesapeake-regional fish to the Midwest for consumption."



Rulifson enjoying the tall ships in San Fran!

State Reports



“In the United States, bluefin tuna quotas are set by weight; however, weight data are generally not collected on recreationally harvested bluefin tuna.”

chief.

The index typically varies from one year to the next, but as long as there isn't a multiple-year drop, fisheries biologists aren't alarmed. For example, in 2002, it was just 4.73. But in 2003, the index was 25.75. The state has 22 sampling sites in the four primary spawning systems: the Upper Bay and the Choptank, Nanticoke and Potomac rivers. Once a month from July through September, DNR biologists seine these sites and count how many YOY fish they catch in two passes. The index number is derived from the mean number of juvenile fish caught in 132 hauls of the net. The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission will meet in Annapolis late next month to review Maryland's 2008 striped bass plan.

Atlantic Bluefin Tuna Cooperative Research Project

In an effort to improve the completeness and quality of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Large Pelagic Survey's (LPS) length – weight relationship for Atlantic bluefin tuna, staff of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Coastal Bays and Atlantic Program worked this summer, in collaboration with other state and federal agencies, to develop spatial and seasonal length-

weight conversion keys that could be compared to the previously established keys used by NMFS to estimate the harvest of Atlantic bluefin tuna along the Atlantic coast. In the United States, bluefin tuna quotas are set by weight; however, weight data are generally not collected on recreationally harvested bluefin tuna as part of the Large Pelagic Intercept Survey (LPIS). Individual length data collected by the LPIS are used to estimate the weight of each tuna using length-weight conversion keys established many years ago from samples taken from a purse seine fishery that operated from Virginia to Maine. Since these conversion keys are based on limited data, it is the goal of this project to update the keys with more current and comprehensive data collected seasonally throughout the entire range of the fishery in order to better estimate the coast-wide landings for more accurate quota management.

Through mid-September, MDNRs Coastal Bays and Atlantic Program biologists have collected length and weight data on over 270 Atlantic bluefin tuna ranging in size from 30 to 70 inches and from 20 to 290 pounds, respectively. These data will be combined with data collected from Massachusetts to North Carolina in order to develop the necessary length-weight conver-

sion keys. Although bluefin tuna landings have slowed in recent weeks, we anticipate a second wave of landings in October as these fish move south from New England to their wintering grounds off the coast of North Carolina. A preliminary look at the data to date indicates that 2007 was a poor year for bluefin tuna harvest along the Atlantic coast. A majority of the cooperating states had a difficult time collecting data due to a lack of bluefin tuna landed in their state. Along with Maryland, each state will be working hard to collect the necessary data over the next few months and a final report will be compiled in the spring of 2008. If you have any questions or would like more information regarding this project please contact Mike Luisi at 410.260.8341 or via email mluisi@dnr.state.md.us.



State Reports

Virginia News from

Debra Parthree

STATE RECORDS BROKEN

Mathews County, VA--

An eight pound, 11 ounce Atlantic croaker (*Micropogonias undulatus*) nicknamed "Big Boy" was caught by Norman T. Jenkins of Portsmouth on August 17, breaking the previous state record of 5 pounds, 13 ounces for this species. Jenkins was fishing for flounder using squid and minnow sandwich bait in about 30 feet of water near New Point Light in Mathews County, VA. The fish was aged using its otoliths at Old Dominion University's Fish Age and Growth Laboratory, and was found to be 8 years old. The male croaker was four times the weight of a normal fish of this age.

Virginia Beach, VA—A 573-pound bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) was caught by Frederick "Bo" Haycox on June 24, breaking the previous state record of 398 pounds, eight ounces. Haycox was trolling in the offshore waters of Virginia using ballyhoo when he hooked the fish. He battled the tuna for nearly 4 hours.

NEW STRIPED BASS LIMITS

Newport News, VA—The fall striped bass (*Morone saxatilis*) season has become

one of the most popular among recreational anglers ever since the species population rebounded dramatically in the 1990's. In fact, the state's recreational quota has been exceeded in 2003, 2004, and 2006. In 2006, the Virginia's Chesapeake Bay recreational harvest was 2.4 million pounds while the quota was 1.6 million pounds. Consequently, new catch limits have been placed in effect for 2007:

-One fish limit from December 10 to December 31

-No-take policy on any fish between 28 and 34 inches throughout the entire season (October 4 to December 31)

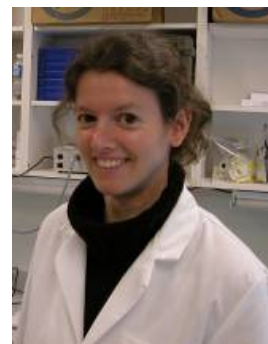
AMERICAN SHAD

American shad (*Alosa sapidissima*), once one of the most important exploited fish species in North America, are currently experiencing all-time lows and do not appear to be recovering. In Virginia, stocks in the York River have shown some signs of rebounding in recent years. However recent declines were reported in the James River and low and stable stock abundance was indicated for the Chesapeake Bay and the Rappahannock River. An independent panel of fisheries science experts suggested considering a reduction of fishing mortality, enhancement of dam passage and mitigation of dam-related fish mortality, and

habitat restoration.

Charlottesville, VA—The Quinn Dam on the Tye River and the Woolen Mills Dam on the Rivanna River were removed in August opening up almost 37 miles of river that had not been free-flowing in about 100 years. Opening these streams allows for restoration of historic spawning habitat for American shad, American eels (*Anguilla rostrata*), and other migratory fish species. The Chesapeake Bay Program's "Chesapeake 2000" initiative identified 1,357 miles of blocked river habitat throughout the watershed they hoped to see opened by 2010. In immediate planning stages is opening of the Harvell Dam on the Appomattox River in Petersburg which no longer functions as a hydroelectric plant and fails to allow fish passage.

King William County, VA—For more than a decade Newport News has waged a battle to build a reservoir on the Pamunkey River which would pump water from the Mattaponi River. The city says the water is needed by the growing Peninsula region. Dozens of people attended a public hearing with the King William County Board of Supervisors to oppose the project. Critics contend the reservoir could harm shad populations on the Mattaponi River and endanger the Mattaponi Indian tribe's fishing traditions.



Debra Parthree
VA Member-at-large

"The fall striped bass season has become one of the most popular among recreational anglers ever since the species population rebounded dramatically in the 1990's."



New Virginia State record for a bluefin tuna.



Fred Scharf
NC Member-at-Large

“North Carolina's two major reef systems — the Outer Shelf Reefs and Lophelia Coral Banks — were not well sampled until a few years ago.”

State Reports

North Carolina News

By Fred Scharf

Studying North Carolina's Natural Reefs

Recent studies on reef fish communities off North Carolina and along the southeastern United States could help determine final boundaries and improve management plans for eight proposed deepwater Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and four deep-sea coral Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs). Steve Ross and Andrea Quattrini, of the University of North Carolina Wilmington, and other researchers have collected baseline information about hardbottom and deep coral bank ecosystems during expeditions over the past six years.

North Carolina's two major reef systems — the Outer Shelf Reefs and Lophelia Coral Banks — were not well sampled until a few years ago. Depth, dangerous bottom currents, rugged bottom terrain and the expense of ship time and technology impeded research. Ross and Quattrini observed fish composition and behavior and reef structure directly with a video camera mounted to the Johnson-Sea-Link submersible and also collected bottom data and specimens by trawling and using hook and line sampling. “Exploring below scuba depth is not

something we get to do very often,” Ross says. “We found new, undescribed crabs, fishes, and fern-shaped hydroids. Many of the creatures we thought rare in deeper systems are not. We just couldn't get at them.” The team discovered that North Carolina's offshore reefs are more extensive and ecologically diverse than previously known. They identified new depths and ranges for many species, including a flat, ray-finned anglefin whiff from eastern Florida and the Caribbean.

North Carolina's Outer Shelf Reefs, as their name suggests, are located at the edge of the continental shelf, some 75 miles offshore. Recreational and commercial fishers are familiar with these reefs because they offer important fish habitat at accessible depths of 160 to 656 feet. These “hardbottom reefs” are covered with sponges, hard and soft corals, bivalves, and hydroid colonies. The researchers found large numbers of sea bass, butterflyfish, gobies, vermilion snappers, grunts, yellow-edge and snowy groupers, and jacks associated with the complex bottom habitat. Species diversity proved greatest at the deeper, shelf-edge locations where the bottom temperature remains warm all year because of the nearby Gulf Stream. The submersible

also dove more than 2,000 feet in some places to investigate three sites in the Lophelia Coral Banks off Cape Lookout and Cape Fear. Mounds and ridges of coral fused with trapped sediment rise 200 to 300 feet above the sea floor. Broken or dead coral cascade down 60-degree slopes, creating a rubble field. “We're still not completely certain that these smaller coral mounds function in the same way as sea mounts,” Ross says. “We might be observing distinct deep reef communities, similar to shallow, tropical reefs, but it's too soon to say.”

Quattrini and Ross believe their baseline studies will help the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC) and NOAA draw final boundaries for eight proposed marine protected areas from North Carolina to the Florida Keys. In June 2007, the SAFMC unanimously proposed this network of MPAs to the Secretary of Commerce as Amendment 14 to the Snapper Grouper Fishery Management Plan. The proposed MPA off North Carolina is the “Snowy Wreck”, named because of large aggregations of snowy groupers associated with a large steel-hulled wreck. The ‘Type 2’ MPA — a roughly 50-square-mile area southeast of Southport, off Frying Pan Shoals — would prohibit harvest or possession of any species in the snap-

State Reports

complex. "The SAFMC currently is proposing the designation of four additional areas of deepwater coral habitat, such as Lophelia beds, as HAPCs and adding measures to protect these areas from fishing-related impacts," stated Mac Currin, chairman of the SAFMC Snapper-Grouper Committee. "This new work expands our knowledge base and will be critical in identifying the extent and complexity of the areas". Ross and Quattrini hope their comprehensive fish studies will help ensure that MPA boundaries are drawn around important hardbottom habitats and species, not bare sand. Biologists possessed data from only one station in the area of the proposed North Carolina MPA before the recent NOAA-sponsored cruises and these studies.

Source: modified from Coastwatch Autumn 2007, NC Sea Grant

New Fisheries Management and You Booklet Available from North Carolina Sea Grant and the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

The development of North Carolina fisheries regulations is often confusing and mysterious. But now, there is help. *Fisheries Management and You: A Guide to Public Involvement in North Carolina Marine Fisheries Management* aims to demystify how the state manages

fisheries and highlight areas for public involvement. This free booklet is a joint publication of North Carolina Sea Grant and the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries. "Public involvement is critical to the fisheries management process," says Sara Mirabilio, a co-author along with Scott Baker, each fisheries extension specialists for NC Sea Grant. North Carolinians "can give something back to enhance the marine fisheries resource in the form of insight or leadership," Mirabilio adds.

The document offers simple guidelines to members of the public who wish to serve on a regional or fishery-specific advisory committee, provide comments at Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) or advisory committee meetings, or submit a formal petition for a rule change. Additionally, the eight-page publication explains the responsibilities of the MFC, provides contact information for the MFC liaison, and summarizes the Fishery Management Plan development process. The document also outlines how the public can participate in fisheries research through the N.C. Fishery Resource Grant and Blue Crab Research programs, which are each funded by the N.C. General Assembly and administered by Sea Grant.

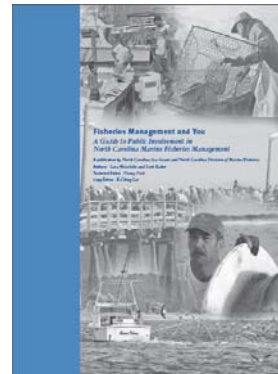
Source:

www.ncseagrants.com

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries Commemorates Decade of Reform

On Aug. 14, 1997, then Gov. James B. Hunt signed the Fisheries Reform Act into law and completely changed the way North Carolina approaches coastal fisheries management. The act legally recognized the importance of balancing the interests of both commercial and recreational fishermen with the need to protect the marine resource for the benefit of all. It also tied the protection of marine fisheries with the conservation and enhancement of coastal habitat. "The Fisheries Reform Act was the guiding factor that helped the Division of Marine Fisheries become one of the best marine fisheries agencies in the nation," states Secretary William G. Ross Jr. of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. "It is a crucial law that led the state to make ecosystem management a central theme in our conservation strategy. It also required a cooperative approach to conservation that we see at work today in the form of the state's Coastal Habitat Protection Plan."

"Without this impetus of state law and subsequent funding, the division would not have been able to move forward as it has," says current NCDMF Director Louis Daniel. One of the



NEW BOOK from NC Sea Grant
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North Carolinians "can give something back to enhance the marine fisheries resource in the form of insight or leadership".



“NCDMF redesign its commercial fishing license system, capping the total number of Standard Commercial Fishing Licenses and Retired Standard Commercial Fishing Licenses that can be issued at 8,896. “

State Reports

requirements of the act was that NCDMF redesign its commercial fishing license system, capping the total number of Standard Commercial Fishing Licenses and Retired Standard Commercial Fishing Licenses that can be issued at 8,896. The law also required this new licensing system to distinguish between commercial fishermen who sell their catch and those who fish with commercial fishing gear for recreational purposes. The new licensing system was implemented on July 1, 1999. The hard cap on commercial fishing licenses has not yet been met. The act also expanded the data collected with an existing Trip Ticket Program, allowing NCDMF to cross-reference landings reports, commercial fishing licenses, and commercial vessel registrations to track when, what and where fishermen were catching seafood and what gear they were using, as well. This detailed tracking ability has provided vital information used in fisheries management decisions. An unforeseen benefit of this change has been the use of the detailed data in helping fishermen gain financial assistance through Hurricane Floyd grants and shrimp and blue crab economic assistance programs.

Another provision of the law created a smaller, more balanced marine fisheries commission. It reduced the

number of members from 17 to nine with three seats reserved for persons representing commercial fishing, three representing recreational fishing, one scientist and two at-large seats. The act also directed NCDMF to prepare draft fishery management plans to be adopted by the Marine Fisheries Commission for all commercially and recreationally important marine species in North Carolina. And it set up an advisory committee process through which these plans were to be adopted by the Marine Fisheries Commission. Four regional advisory committees were set up to review region specific issues for the northeast, central and southern coastal areas and inland areas of the state. Four standing advisory committees were set up to review issues pertaining to finfish, shellfish, crustaceans and habitat and water quality. The result was fishery management plans adopted only after a comprehensive and very public review of the fishery that took into account the species' life history and stock status, as well as commercial, recreational, economic and sociological issues. To date, NCDMF has completed or revised nine fishery management plans covering numerous species.

Lastly, the act required the development and adoption of a Coastal Habitat Protec-

tion Plan, a multi-agency ecosystem management plan for coastal fish habitats. The plan was developed by agencies within the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) and adopted by the Marine Fisheries Commission, the Coastal Resources Commission and the Environmental Management Commission in December 2004. The three commissions and NCDENR subsequently approved integrated implementation plans specifying more than 100 specific actions to be taken. Many of these actions have been put into place and new implementation plans are ongoing. The North Carolina Coastal Habitat Protection Plan was the first of its kind and is being used as a blueprint for other ecosystem management plans on the state and national level.

Source: modified from NCDMF news release (www.ncfisheries.net/news/releases.htm)

Happenings

Cool Water Fish Culture Workshop, Indianapolis, January 13-15, 2008 –

This is the second call for papers for the 2008 Cool Water Fish Culture Workshop, to be held in Indianapolis, IN on January 13 through 15, 2008. This meeting will be held at the Clarion Waterfront <http://www.clarionwaterfront.net>

near the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Attached is a brief description of the Clarion Waterfront Hotel in a PDF document.

The date for presentation submittals has been extended to November 14, 2007. We still have many great spaces available for your particular presentation. Take a moment and consider some of the great projects you all have been working on this season. What particular skills, projects, experiences, or other key points could you highlight about your program? There's a good chance others may be working or dealing with a similar situation, and your presentation may help a fellow agency member out...

Please consider submitting an abstract for the Cool Water Fish Culture Workshop by the extended deadline.

Please forward this information to any and all appropriate individuals. We look

forward to seeing you all in Indianapolis in January!

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Molecules to Marine Management Workshop,

Duke Marine Lab, February, 2008 --

New techniques and approaches to molecular biology continue to emerge at a rapid rate. These techniques are moving out of the lab and being increasingly used by conservation biologists and ecologists. While these studies are answering numerous questions in their academic fields, they may not be addressing questions that managers on the ground are asking. At the same time conservation practitioners in government and NGOs may not be fully aware of existing and anticipated molecular advances. Taken together, we have a situation where fascinating new tools are not being considered holistically for their ability to provide quicker, more accurate or more complete answers to critical

ocean conservation issues. For more information contact:

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AFS 138TH ANNUAL MEETING, AUGUST 17-21 2008

We invite you to join us in Ottawa, Canada's capital city, for the 138th Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) at the Ottawa Congress Centre and Westin Hotel August 17-21, 2008. The theme of the meeting is "Fisheries in Flux: How Do We Ensure Our Sustainable Future". This theme reflects President Mary Fabrizio's Program of Work for her year in office, and addresses the ongoing challenge of confronting change when managing fisheries.



Recognition



Walter and Ray Davenport receive heritage awards.

“Boatbuilding and net making are among their many skills and they are unsurpassed in their knowledge “

North Carolina Folklife Heritage Awards

Frank Stasio, host of the popular National Public Radio show, *The State of Things*, emceed an exciting and free evening packed with North Carolina culture. Presented by the North Carolina Arts Council to honor the state's most eminent folk artists, the event recognizes recipients of the North Carolina Heritage Award. Since 1989, the award has deepened awareness of the stories, music and artistry that comprise our rich and diverse cultural and folklife traditions. Two honorees were North Carolina commercial fishermen: Walter and Ray Davenport, Preservers of Coastal Tradition (Tyrrell County). Brothers and fishermen, Walter and Ray Davenport preserve traditions associated with fishing the rivers, sounds and ocean waters of North Carolina's coast. Boatbuilding and net making are among their many skills and they are unsurpassed in their knowledge of weather patterns, local currents and tides, and of the fish and wildlife that inhabit the sounds. Source: Partnership for the Sounds

Jimmie Pigg Memorial Outstanding Student Achievement Award

The Warmwater Streams Committee was established in 1976 as a technical com-

mittee within the Southern Division of the American Fisheries Society in order to address issues related to warmwater streams. The Committee promotes the conservation and management of warmwater streams by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas, information, and concerns. The Committee created an Outstanding Student Achievement Award in 1997 to recognize university students who are truly outstanding in research, education and professional endeavors. Outstanding student(s) are recognized at the Southern Division's Annual Mid-Year Meeting and receive a plaque, funds to travel to the meeting (\$300), and a one-year membership to the American Fisheries Society. In 1999, the award was re-named the Jimmie Pigg Memorial Outstanding Student Achievement Award in honor of Jimmie Pigg, a longtime supporter of student activities.

This year we will select two recipients, one MS student and one PhD student. Students must be either currently enrolled in a university or had been enrolled during the 2006-2007 academic year. Criteria are based on research, education and professional activities. Research criteria can be achieved by either independent graduate activities or collaborative research with educators or

fishery scientists. All aspects of research activities concerned with warmwater streams are acceptable. An outstanding educational record based on undergraduate and/or graduate courses is desirable. Courses concerned with fishery or aquatic biology, statistical concepts, and warmwater stream biology and management are highly desirable, but not required. Professional activities such as holding offices or chairing committees in fishery-related student organizations, AFS Chapters, and other professional organizations are desirable. Activities in public services such as children fishing derbies, teaching conservation and fishing workshops to local elementary and high schools and other conservation-related activities are also desirable. All nominees must be willing to present their research at the 2008 SDAFS Spring Meeting and must submit with the nomination material an abstract. All nominees will be ranked based on research (40%), education (25%), professional service (25%) and public service (10%). A committee of members employed by state and federal agencies, and universities will serve as the selection committee. Nomination material is available from the Committee's homepage housed in the SD AFS site (<http://www.sdafs.org/wvstreams/scholar07.htm>)

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