



# TIDEWATER CHAPTER

Southern Division - American Fisheries Society

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 1

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1990

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all Tidewater Chapter members. Those of you who were unable to attend the 4th annual meeting in Virginia Beach missed a dandy! On behalf of the Chapter, I would like to thank all the speakers for their excellent presentations. I also would like to express our appreciation to Mr. Mac Rawls and his staff of the Virginia Marine Science Museum for hosting the annual meeting. Our sincere thanks to Southern Division President Richard Noble for his attendance and participation at the meeting, and last, but by all means not least, I would like to thank all those members who assisted in making the 4th annual meeting such a success.

Since the annual meeting, I attended the mid-term EXCOM of the Southern Division held in Memphis, TN, February 12, 1990. The agenda included a 2-hour workshop which focused on developing procedural guides for chapters, technical committees, and officers. I found this to be most interesting and informative, as I had the opportunity to sit down with several other chapter presidents and "crow" about our organizations. Other topics of interest were newsletter exchange among the Chapters (something I believe we are already doing [since April '89-ed.]), maintaining a chapter "History Book," and planning for the future. If any member wishes to expand on any of the forementioned or has some other ideas for our Chapter, please let me know and we can discuss them at our next chapter EXCOM meeting. By the way, EXCOM meetings are open to the membership. If you are interested in attending, contact one of the officers or your Member-At-Large.

At the Southern Division EXCOM, I presented the resolution that was approved at our business meeting: "To maintain the Tidewater Chapter as it was originally established." It appears that North Carolina will be forming a state chapter (see News

from the States-ed.), and there is a group in Virginia spearheading the formation of another chapter in that state. The problem as I see it is which "zip codes" will the new Virginia chapter encompass? My opinion is if the AFS charters another chapter in Virginia, then let the AFS designate specific zip codes for that chapter, and leave it up to individuals to decide which chapter they want to be associated with. A meeting is being arranged by Southern Division President Richard Noble of all concerned parties to discuss the NC - VA chapter dilemma.

The Tidewater Chapter continues to be a grassroots organization, meeting its objectives of information exchange of the fisheries resources within the coastal areas of Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. The strong support from the membership shows they believe in the chapter and through this support, the Tidewater Chapter should continue to be a valuable resource for fisheries professionals in the tri-state tidewater area.

*- Ron Southwick*

## CHESAPEAKE BAY ROCKFISH

The article "Rockfish Spawn a Coastal Controversy" reported in the September issue ( Vol. 4, No. 3) of this newsletter has sparked some debate. Mr. R.S. Early of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources wrote a response to the article to correct factual inaccuracies and to correct what he perceives as a biased tone which he believes faults the juvenile index survey and coastal management. Herewith is the text of Mr. Early's letter:

Dear Sir:

Simple inaccuracies of the Volume 4 Number 3 Newsletter article on striped bass and the Maryland juvenile index are:

1. Total catch at Hambrooks Bar for all hauls (6) was 1487 striped bass.
2. This is 44.7% of catch (3327) for all systems.
3. There is no way make the catch of four Hambrooks Bar hauls = 1698 or 51.1% of total.

Those are relatively minor, but need never been printed had the author, or editor, checked facts with any principle of the study.

More distressing is the article "tone" which faults the survey and coastal management by innuendo and implication. Opinions are common but those presented were misleading and the article failed to present the other side of the story.

Colvocoresses and Austin (1987) point out that the survey could be better; this is a truism for any relative abundance survey. [Ed. note- this refers to a paragraph where the authors of the above paper indicated that the seine surveys were originally intended to provide information on long term trends but were now being used in population models, a use beyond the statistical properties of the original data sets]. Although Heimbuch et al. (1983) decided that the Maryland index generally distinguishes only between poor, average and very good year classes, it was with full understanding of inherent index variability that Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) incorporated the index into management.

Despite the above, several studies have demonstrated management utility of the Maryland Chesapeake index. Schaefer (1972) states that "approximately 70 percent of the variability in annual New York landings of striped bass can be explained by previous annual fluctuations of year-class production in upper Chesapeake Bay." Goodyear (1985) concludes "the results of this investigation provide strong evidence that the striped bass juvenile index is a good estimator of year-class strength for striped bass produced in Maryland waters of the Chesapeake Bay." Austin and Hickey (1978) correlated modal length with year-class strength which was correctly predicted by the Maryland juvenile index. Maryland's Chesapeake Bay Research and Monitoring Program found a significant correlation between the juvenile index and subsequent adult abundance (Rugolo and Jones, 1989). ASMFC accepts the index and its use as a "key element of recently developed models used to run simulations of effects of various management strategies" (Colvocoresses et al. 1988) and a key element of the Interstate Striped Bass Plan Amendments 3 and 4.

Certainly no responsible scientist or manager suggests the Maryland index is the last word on stock health. The "ongoing debate" does not concern validity of the Maryland juvenile index, so much as what might constitute a better measure of reproductive success for the entire management unit (Maine - North Carolina inclusive). ASMFC has directed the Striped Bass Scientific and Statistical Committee to evaluate combined indices of reproductive success (i.e. Maine, New York, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina) that might better describe the coastal stock. Moreover several studies address adult abundance, distribution, and mortality and are evaluated in developing management strategy.

Why isolate Maryland? Maryland and Delaware are the only states which have not fished since 1985; North Carolina observes only an Atlantic coast moratorium. Maryland is simply responding to ASMFC direction as are all management unit states.

Angus Phillips' quote about fisheries managers and "go get 'em" is not responsible or representative of ASMFC or Maryland management proposals. All managers support a stringently controlled, extremely conservative fishery, at a fraction of the historical fishing mortality rate, not the free for all implied by Phillips' quote. The author apparently failed to avail his/herself of the many sources which could have provided an objective picture of this critical period in coastal striped bass management.

My primary concern is that the article arose almost solely from the criticism of two dubiously qualified individuals, a jeweler and lure maker with scarcely concealed ulterior motive, and resultant, sensationalized, news accounts. Had any Tidewater Chapter representative contacted study principals or even just presented the story in context of the ASMFC coastal plan my concerns would have been largely addressed.

Any audience, lay or peer, knows only what is presented. I believe the Newsletter obligated itself to a complete story. I have tried suggesting this novel approach to the news media with only marginal success.

#### References cited:

- Austin, H.M. and C.R. Hickey, Jr. 1978. Predicting abundance of striped bass, *Morone saxatilis*, in New York waters from modal lengths. Fish. Bull. 76(2).

Colvocoresses, J. and H.M. Austin. 1987. Development of an index of juvenile striped bass abundance for the Chesapeake Bay system. Spec. Sci. Rep. No. 120, VIMS, School of Marine Science, College of William and Mary, Gloucester Pt., Va.

\_\_\_\_\_, J.G. Loesch, and W.H. Kriete, Jr. 1988. Juvenile striped bass seining program, Part I. Annual Rep., June 1988. Pg. 1-2.

Goodyear, C.P. 1985. Relationship between reported commercial landings and abundance of young striped bass in Chesapeake Bay, Maryland. Trans. Am. Fish. Soc. 114 (1):92-96.

Heimbuch, D.G., P.W. Jones, and B.J. Rothschild. 1983. An analysis of Maryland's juvenile striped bass index of abundance. UMCEES Ref. No. 83-51. Chesapeake Biological Laboratory.

Rugolo, L.J., and P.W. Jones. 1989. A recruitment based interseason harvest control model for Chesapeake Bay striped bass. Md. Dept. Nat. Res., Chesapeake Bay Research and Monitoring Program.

Schaefer, R.H. 1972. A short range forecast function for predicting the relative abundance of striped bass in Long Island waters. N.Y. Fish and Game J. 19(2):178-181.

Reader comments are welcome. Please send them to John Cooper, Newsletter Editor-Tidewater Chapter, ICMR, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC 27858.

#### FOURTH ANNUAL MEETING

The fourth annual meeting was held at the Virginia Marine Science Museum which houses a 50,000 gallon aquarium, among other live exhibits and educational exhibits. Attendees were treated to a behind the scenes tour of the large fish tanks and experiments in rearing sea turtles. This facility is well worth seeing and is a credit to Virginia Beach.

Approximately sixty members and guests registered for the meeting; 23 scientific papers were presented on various topics, representing six universities and six government agencies.

The winner of the Best Paper Award was Ken Paynter (Chesapeake Bay Institute) for "Growth studies on oysters in the Chesapeake Bay" and the winner of the Best Student Paper was Beth Sasser (East Carolina

Univ.) for "Presence of estriol in the blue crab, *Callinectes sapidus*."-JC

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The annual business meeting was held during lunch at the Clarion Resort and Conference Center. President Eileen Setzler-Hamilton presented the gavel to incoming President Ron Southwick and commended him for the excellence of this year's Chapter meeting. Thanks were also extended to Joe Loesch (VIMS), Nominating Committee, Pat Tester (NOAA), Audit Committee, Chris Bonzek (VIMS), Secretary-Treasurer, and John Cooper (ECU), Newsletter Editor.

New officers for 1990 were elected:

**President-elect:** John V. Merriner, National Marine Fisheries Service, Beaufort Laboratory, Beaufort, NC 28516 919-728-8708

**Secretary-Treasurer:** Richard T. Eades, Virginia Dept. Game and Inland Fisheries, 500 Hinton Ave., Chesapeake, Virginia 23323 804-683-2872

**Virginia At-Large Member:** Erik Barth, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, P.O. Box 756, 2401 West Ave., Newport News, Virginia 23607 804-247-2236

**Maryland At-Large Member:** Ron Klauda, Johns Hopkins Univ., 4800 Atwell Rd., Shady Side, MD. 20764 301-867-7000

**North Carolina At-Large Member:** Roger Rulifson, ICMR, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC 27858 919-757-6220

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The following resolution was approved by the members present at the business meeting and was presented by President Ron Southwick at the Southern Division meeting in Memphis, TN.:

#### A RESOLUTION FOR CONTINUATION OF THE TIDEWATER CHAPTER AS IT WAS ESTABLISHED

**WHEREAS**, the members of the Tidewater Chapter, American Fisheries Society, think that it is in the best interests of the American Fisheries Society and of fisheries professionals to continue their professional involvement with the Tidewater Chapter; and

**WHEREAS**, the American Fisheries Society and fisheries professionals have a common interest in the tidal freshwater, estuarine, and coastal fisheries of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the states of Maryland and North Carolina;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Tidewater Chapter of the American Fisheries Society at its annual meeting, 11-13 January 1990, in Virginia Beach, Virginia, that it strongly recommends that the formation of additional chapters in the three-state area not compromise the integrity and future viability of the Tidewater Chapter.

(Ed. note: It should be stated that the members of the Tidewater Chapter are in favor of new chapters and will support any effort to establish them.)

#### RAFFLE and SILENT AUCTION

During the coffee breaks on each day, an art print by Al Agnew was raffled along with consolation prizes of Chapter T-shirts. The winners of the prints were Roger Rulifson, John Cooper, and Ed Sismour. The silent auction of the 1987 Missouri Trout Stamp and Print was concluded on Saturday and the winner was John Cooper. The prints and Trout Stamp were donated by Al Agnew and Cedar Creek Publishers to help the Chapter raise money. In this regard, the Chapter raised approximately \$200.-*JC*

#### SOUTHERN DIVISION - ST. LOUIS

The Tidewater Chapter cosponsored an informal marine paper session at the Southern Division meeting in St. Louis. Thirteen papers representing research in eight states were presented to a packed room of scientists. It was an encouraging start to increasing marine scientist participation in the Southern Division. Organization of this meeting was done primarily by Rick Monaghan (NC), Chairman of the Marine and Estuarine Resources Committee.-*JC*

#### NEWS FROM THE STATES

**North Carolina. NORTH CAROLINA FISHERIES WORKERS ASSOCIATION.** Considerable progress is being made by the North Carolina Fisheries Workers Association in its effort to become a Chapter of AFS. In a recent mail ballot, members of the Association voted 65 to 11 in favor of becoming a Chapter. At the recent meeting of NCFWA in February, efforts were made to draft bylaws for the Chapter to be presented to the AFS Executive Committee in Pittsburgh in August.

A novel approach to information exchange was tried at this meeting: a poster session for all attendees,

ready or not. Creativity was evident in many of these impromptu posters. Some participants had the audacity to prepare ahead of time and produce professional-looking posters.

New officers for NCFWA were elected: President-elect: Don Cloutman (Duke Power Co.); and Secretary-Treasurer: Mickey Clemmons (Wildlife Resources Commission).-*JC*

**TAR-PAMLICO RIVER:** Several changes have occurred on the local level for residents of the Tar-Pamlico River system. The Environmental Management Commission approved the designation of the Tar-Pamlico as Nutrient Sensitive Waters in September.

After much criticism by citizen groups concerning the State's plan for controlling pollution, the Commission agreed to allow the public to prepare an alternative strategy to include non-point source pollution as well as point-source. The Commission adopted the new strategy at its December meeting. More information can be obtained from Pamlico-Tar River Foundation, P.O. Box 1854, Washington, NC 27889.-*JC*

**Maryland.** Nothing has happened here since December 1989.

**Virginia. AQUACULTURE NEWS.** Virginia State University began its first full year of hybrid striped bass culture testing by the private sector in 1989. In anticipation of some difficulty by individuals to obtain minimal numbers of fingerlings, the VSU Aquaculture Initiative Extension Office made fingerlings available to farmers. As of 1 August, 25,000 fingerlings had been distributed to eight cooperators.

The Extension Office, along with the VA Department of Agriculture, conducted a statewide study of commercial hybrid striped bass culture environments. Cooperators ranged from small family farms using existing ponds for cage culture to new ponds constructed specifically for hybrid striped bass culture. Cooperating operations must be permitted by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission. More than 20 permit requests have been submitted.

Indications of feed conversion values, growth rates, and effects of water temperature and various management practices were to be examined and compared to baseline water quality data collected at each facility.-*BN,JC*

**VIRGINIA FISH FARMERS ASSOCIATION.** The Virginia Fish Farmers Association, formerly known as Mid-Virginia Fish Farmers Association, now an official organization with bylaws and a Board of Directors, has been able to reduce the costs of catfish fingerling and fish food purchases for its members. Catfish feed is produced in Halifax, Virginia.

The concerns of the VFFA include improved consumer recognition of farm-raised catfish as an excellent source of protein, increased competition between fingerling suppliers, increased markets for catfish, and future processing needs in Virginia.-*BN,JC*

**AQUACULTURE COURSES.** The Virginia State University Curriculum Committee has approved an Aquatic Sciences Curriculum, including aquaculture courses, which will be offered in Spring, 1990.-*BN*

#### FISH NOTES

There have been some problems with updating the Chapter membership list: if your mailing label has 89 on it, we have not received your renewal. If you have not renewed your membership for 1990, please send your check (\$5.00) to Richard Eades, Secretary-Treasurer-Tidewater Chapter, 500 Hinton Ave., Chesapeake, VA. 23323. If you have renewed and have 89 on the label, contact Richard to sort it out: 804-683-2872.

Some members who had renewed their Chapter membership through AFS did not receive the Annual Meeting program. The mailing list was made up from the Chapter's most recent list: the Secretary-Treasurer had not received those renewals from AFS prior to the meeting program mailing. We will do our best to prevent this from happening in the future.

Southern Division President Rich Noble has donated the following issues of Chesapeake Science and Estuaries to the Chapter.

Ches. Science: complete from Vol. 5, 1964 to Vol. 18, 1977

Estuaries Vol. 1, 1978 complete and Vol. 2 No. 1

Anyone interested in obtaining these can do so by bidding for them. Send a letter to this effect to President Ron Southwick with your bid. Postage should be included in the bid: the journals weigh in at 16 lbs.

#### ABSTRACTS

Henry, Lynn T. 1989. Feasibility of fyke nets as an alternative to gill nets in the Albemarle Sound white perch fishery. NC Division of Marine Fisheries, P.O. Box 769, Morehead City, NC 28557.

During November 1988 through April 1989, an attempt was made to reintroduce and gain acceptance of a historical gear, the fyke net, into the Albemarle Sound commercial fishery. The principal objective of this effort was to determine the feasibility of using fyke nets as an alternative to gill nets for the white perch fishery. Project objectives were: 1) document and compare species catch rates (CPUE) by species for gill nets versus fyke nets, (specifically pertaining to white perch); 2) test and modify fyke net designs and mesh sizes to evaluate catchability for various species; 3) develop a mobile, easy-to-utilize fyke net; 4) introduce area fishermen to various fyke net designs and utilize their expertise in evaluating the nets; 5) determine areas and water depths in which fyke nets are considered an efficient gear; and 6) document and evaluate catch and live release of striped bass bycatch from fyke nets. Fyke and gill nets were set at strategic sites throughout western Albemarle Sound and some tributaries. Data collected for comparison consisted of: catch per unit effort (CPUE), percent of total catch, total number per species, and mean length and ranges for each species. Four different style fyke nets were utilized during the project. Several 3.5 inch stretched mesh gill nets were used as control nets. White and yellow perch were the dominant species captured in the fyke nets while gizzard shad represented the majority of the gill net catch. No striped bass were captured in fyke nets during the study; therefore the evaluation of the catch and live release of striped bass bycatch was not conducted. Project results were compared to a study conducted by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission which utilized fyke nets during 1952 and 1953. The potential use of stakes and anchors to set fyke nets was evaluated. It was concluded that a fyke net set using anchors would be more feasible for commercial fishermen to utilize due to the reduced deployment time and mobility. It was also determined that during colder weather, fyke nets are not a feasible alternative to gill nets because fish will not readily expend the energy necessary to lead a net. In light of the mesh size evaluation, it was recommended that hoopnets of 2.5-3.0 inch stretched mesh should be used to reduce small fish bycatch. The overall project conclusion states that economically, fyke nets, when compared to gill nets, would only be feasible during March and April.

### MEETINGS

**ATLANTIC ESTUARINE RESEARCH SOCIETY.** Will be held on 2-5 May, 1990, at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Gloucester Point, VA. Deadline for submission of abstracts is 16 March.

**EARLY LIFE HISTORY SECTION - AFS.** The Fourteenth Annual Larval Fish Conference will be held on 6-9 May, 1990, in Beaufort, NC, at the Duke University Marine Laboratory.

**AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ICHTHYOLOGISTS AND HERPETOLOGISTS.** The 70th Annual meeting will be held on 14-20 June, 1990, at the College of Charleston, Charleston, SC, in conjunction with the American Elasmobranch Society and the Southeastern Fishes Council.

