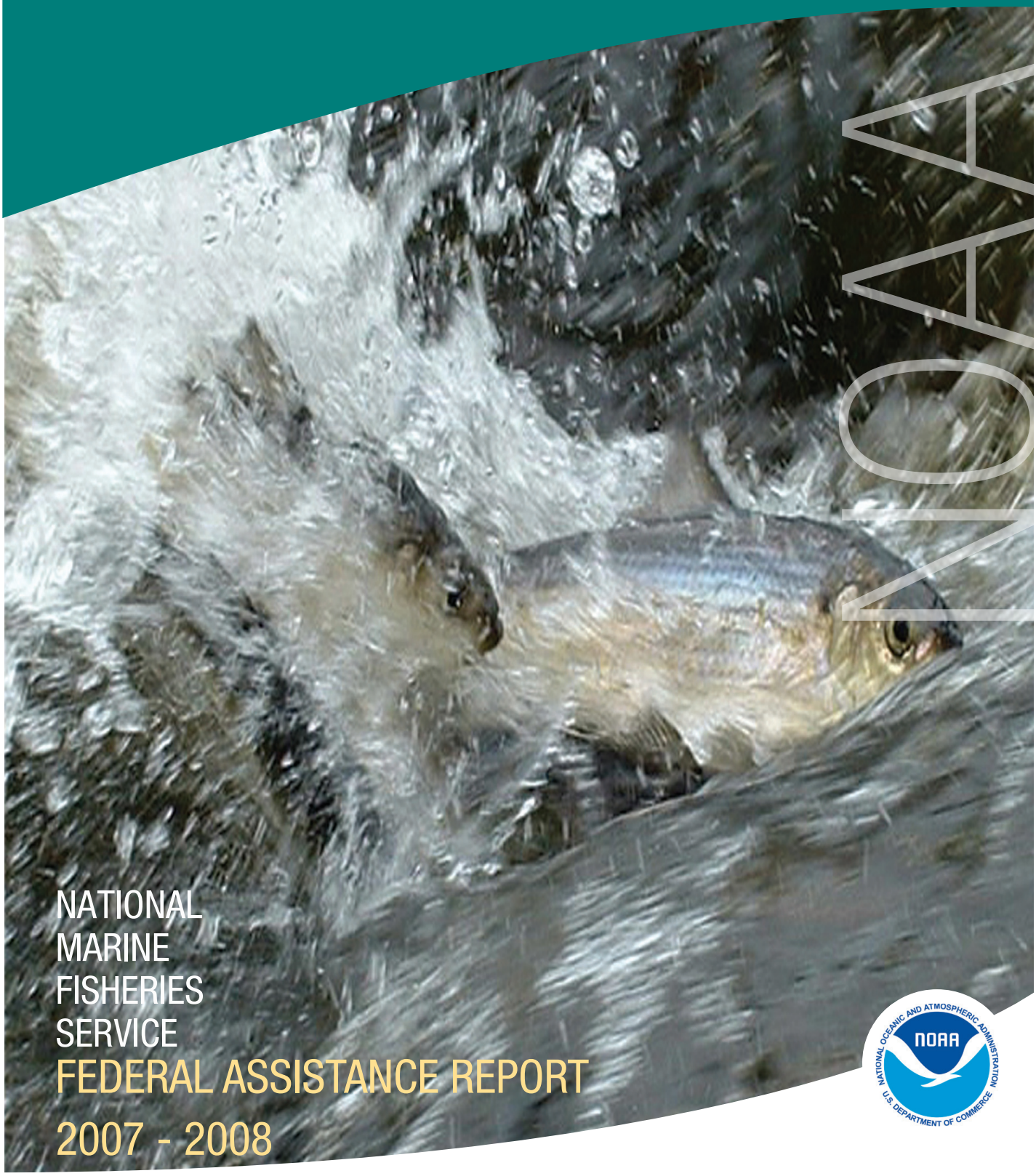
ATLANTIC COASTAL FISHERIES COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT ACT



NATIONAL
MARINE
FISHERIES
SERVICE

FEDERAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

2007 - 2008

U.S. Department of Commerce | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | National Marine Fisheries Service

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NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service Vision: The American people enjoy the riches and benefits of healthy and diverse marine ecosystems.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

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AUTHORIZATION

This report is submitted in compliance with the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act of 1993, as amended, (16 U.S.C. 5107 et seq.).

ATLANTIC COASTAL FISHERIES COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT ACT FEDERAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES FOR FY 2007 AND 2008

Introduction

With the passage of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (Atlantic Coastal Act or ACA) in December 1993, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), in cooperation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), was charged with the responsibility of supporting the interstate fisheries management efforts of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). When Congress reauthorized the Atlantic Coastal Act in 2000 (Public Law 106-555) they required that the Secretary of Commerce submit biennial reports to Congress on the use of Federal assistance provided to ASMFC and the Atlantic coastal states under the Atlantic Coastal Act. Each biennial report shall also evaluate the success of funded activities in implementing the Atlantic Coastal Act.

This report reviews fiscal year (FY) 2007 and FY 2008 funding for the Atlantic Coastal Act. The review was conducted by the NMFS Headquarters' Office of Sustainable Fisheries, NMFS Northeast and Southeast Regional Offices, and the ASMFC. The report contains:

1) Funding process;
2) Project selection;
3) Total funding appropriated by Congress to implement the Atlantic Coastal Act for FY 2007 and FY 2008 and allocation;
4) Overview of projects; and
5) Overall evaluation of the successes of such funding in the implementation of the Atlantic Coastal Act.

Funding Process

At the beginning of each fiscal year, NMFS determines the total available funds. After receiving recommendations from ASMFC and eligible Atlantic Coast States, NMFS determines the distribution of available funds among recipients. Eligible "States" under the Atlantic Coastal Act include all ASMFC member States, the District of Columbia, and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission (PRFC).

Formula for Distribution of Funds to Eligible States

Once the total available funds are determined, the percentage of these funds that go to each State are allocated based on a formula that includes a 1/3 equal distribution, a 1/3 distribution weighted by the value of each State's commercial and recreational fisheries, and a 1/3 distribution weighted by the number of ASMFC fisheries management plans (FMPs) in which each State participated.

Distribution of ACCSP Funds

The Atlantic Coast Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP) is a cooperative state-federal program to design, implement, and conduct marine fisheries statistics data collection programs and to integrate those data into a single data management system that will meet the needs of fishery managers, scientists, and fishermen. It is composed of representatives from natural resource management agencies coastwide, including the Commission, the three Atlantic fishery management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, the DC Fisheries and Wildlife Division, NMFS, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

The ACCSP Coordinating Council an oversight group comprised of ASMFC, eligible States, NMFS, FWS, and the three Atlantic coast Federal fishery management councils, serves as a centralized budgeting and coordinating body for Atlantic Coastal Act funds for the implementation of the ACCSP. The ACCSP funds are allocated to recipients periodically during the year, based on the recommendations of the Coordinating Council's Operating Committee. In contrast to general State projects, which are based on each individual State's discretion and are comprised of diverse projects that support the Atlantic Coastal Act, ACCSP funding is more centralized and coordinated on a coast-wide basis. The Coordinating Council is also involved in making recommendations on the allocation of these ACCSP funds.

Project Selection

Section 803 of the Atlantic Coastal Act directs the Secretary of Commerce, in cooperation with the Secretary of the Interior, to develop and implement a program to support the interstate fishery management efforts of ASMFC. The program shall include activities to support and enhance State cooperation in:

(1) The collection, management, and analysis of fishery data (statistics);
(2) Fisheries management planning;
(3) Fisheries research, including stock assessment, and biological and economic research;
(4) Fisheries law enforcement; and
(5) Habitat conservation.

The selection process for specific activities to be carried out under the Atlantic Coastal Act Program has been left to the discretion of ASMFC and the States, with the stipulation that submitted projects must support one of the five project priorities listed above. This process has resulted in enhancing individual State agency capabilities to perform activities that support ASMFC's Interstate Fisheries Management Program, which includes the development of Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) and addenda and amendments to these FMPs. Projects were designed to strengthen individual agencies in areas where the recipients had the greatest internal needs. For instance, many States use some of their Atlantic Coastal Act funding to provide better marine commercial fisheries statistics, while other States use a portion of their funding for projects for fisheries law enforcement. In this respect, the agencies with the most insight of local needs have applied a considerable amount of effort toward developing a stronger State/Federal system to support their responsibilities under the Atlantic Coastal Act. Table 1 contains the breakdown of funding to ACA recipients for FY 2007 and FY 2008.

Table 1. Atlantic Coastal Act Grants for FY 2007 and 2008.

Recipient	Total Projects	FY 2007	FY 2008	Total
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission		1,900,000	1,900,000	3,800,000
Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program		1,425,000	1,425,000	2,850,000
Maine	6	219,053	216,005	435,058
New Jersey	3	213,799	209,208	423,007
North Carolina	5	207,571	199,994	407,565
Rhode Island	3	179,009	174,896	353,905
Florida	2	221,216	214,867	436,083
Massachusetts	2	231,783	228,218	460,001
New York	2	191,698	187,579	379,277
Maryland	3	184,299	178,973	363,272
South Carolina	2	170,941	166,803	337,744
Virginia	1	201,000	196,684	397,684
Connecticut	1	171,863	167,699	339,562
Delaware	1	164,601	160,557	325,158
Georgia	2	164,983	160,764	325,747
New Hampshire	2	162,225	158,625	320,850
Pennsylvania	1	157,885	154,169	312,054
Potomac River Fisheries Commission	1	97,850	97,850	195,700
District of Columbia	1	38,000	38,000	76,000
Grand Total	38	6,302,776	6,235,891	12,538,667

Overview of Federal Usage of Funds

The NMFS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service utilize ACA funds (Table 2) to participate in quarterly Commission meetings, technical committee meetings, ACCSP meetings, program administration, and research. For example, ACA funded the annual northern shrimp trawl survey in the Gulf of Maine.

Table 2. Federal Allocation of Atlantic Coastal Act Funding for FY 2007 and 2008.

	Federal Allocation	FY 2007	FY 2008
NMFS	Sustainable Fisheries	20,000	20,000
	Science and Technology	26,000	26,000
	Habitat Conservation	13,000	13,000
	Protected Resources	8,000	8,000
	Northeast Regional Office*	198,500	214,700
	Northeast Fisheries Science Center	111,000	111,000
	Southeast Regional Office	15,000	15,000
	Southeast Fisheries Science Center	120,000	120,000
	Chesapeake Bay Program Office	4,000	4,000
	US Fish and Wildlife Service	100,000	100,000

***NERO Total includes $123,500 permanent salary transfer.**

ASMFC and ACCSP

The ASMFC, including the ACCSP, receive approximately 45 percent of their funding from the ACA. Together the ASMFC and the ACCSP employ 31 staff in their offices in the District of Columbia. The ASMFC cooperatively manages over 28 stocks of marine fish from Maine to Florida. Of these 28 stocks, 11 are healthy or rebuilding. The ACCSP has grown to establish coast-wide data collection and reporting standards and now serves as a data warehouse for over 50 years of complete fisheries landings data. The ACCSP developed and runs the Standard Atlantic Fisheries Information System (SAFIS) which is the principal electronic seafood dealer reporting system on the Atlantic coast.

Overview of FY 2007 and FY 2008 Projects

As has been the case for the past few years, the financial assistance provided to the States through the Atlantic Coastal Act has allowed States to maintain programs that are essential to fisheries management. It has been especially important in this period marked by declining State financial resources for the States to be able to continue programs that would not likely exist without the ACA funding. As listed above, projects may be of five different types. Some projects may span more than one type. However, most states choose the following project types:

Project Types	States
Fisheries Law Enforcement	VA, NH, DE
Fishery Research/Stock Assessments	MA, PA, NH, DE, FL, MD
Fishery Data Collection/Analysis	GA, NC, CT, MA, NY, FL, PA, ME, SC, RI, NC
Fisheries Management Planning	GA, NY, NJ, RI, NH, DE, MD, SC

During the 2007-2008 period a total of 38 unique projects were funded. Many projects cover multiple years. These projects enabled the ASMFC to complete its first benchmark shad stock assessment, implement the coastal sharks fishery management plan (FMP), implement necessary addendums and amendments to several interstate FMPs, and continue the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program (NEAMAP) fisheries-independent bottom trawl survey. For the States, data collection and monitoring continuing for priority species including American eel, shad, and river herring populations. Several States also continued working toward improving seafood dealer and vessel reporting as well as working to improve recreational fishing data collection.

Evaluation of Projects Funded in FY 2007 and FY 2008

Projects funded through the Atlantic Coastal Act are evaluated by many different metrics and thus are difficult to summarize without getting into specifics for each individual project. As an example, common metrics include the number of enforcement actions, the number of permits issued, the number of service calls to seafood dealers and commercial harvesters, the number of meetings attended, the number of observed fishing trips, and the number of fish sampling tows. Each recipient submits semi-annual and annual reports to the Northeast and Southeast Regional Program Offices for evaluation. In many cases the funding provided through the Atlantic Coastal Act enables the State to conduct essential fisheries work that it would be unable to support otherwise. Perhaps the best metric by which to evaluate the success of these projects is through the status of the fisheries resources themselves. Of the 27 fish stocks (not including the coastal sharks FMP) managed, all, or in part, through the ASMFC, the stock status is known for 20 species. Of those 20 species 50 percent are not overfished, and overfishing is not occurring for 82 percent of the managed stocks.

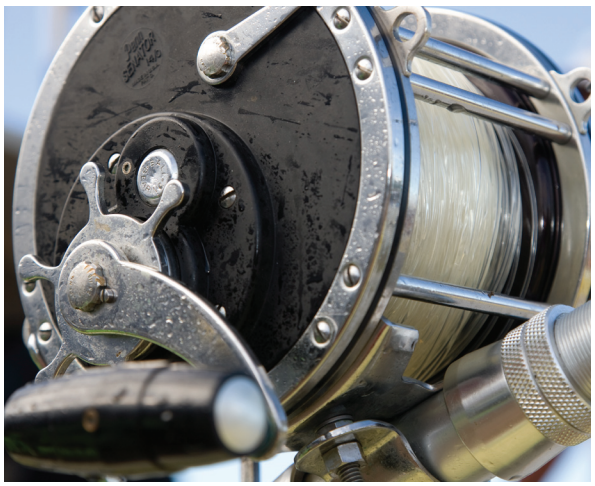

Table 3. Stock status for ASMFC managed species.

SPECIES	STOCK	OVERFISHED	OVERFISHING
Atlantic Striped Bass		N	N
Atlantic Herring		N	N
Atlantic Menhaden		N	N
Northern Shrimp		N	N
Spiny Dogfish		N	N
American Lobster	Gulf of Maine	N	N
	Georges Bank	N	N
	Southern New England	Depleted	Y
Atlantic Croaker	Mid-Atlantic	N	N
	South Atlantic	Unknown	Unknown
Spanish Mackerel		Unknown	N
Bluefish		N	N
Summer Flounder		N	N
Atlantic Sturgeon		Y	N
Tautog		Y	N
Weakfish		Depleted	N
American Shad		Depleted	Unknown
Winter Flounder	Gulf of Maine	Y*	Y*
	So. New England/Mid-Atlantic	Y	Y
Coastal Sharks		Varies by species & species complex	Varies by species & species complex
Scup		Y	Unknown
Black Sea Bass		Y	Unknown
Red Drum		Y	Unknown
River Herring		Unknown	Unknown
American Eel		Unknown	Unknown
Horseshoe Crab		Unknown	Unknown
Spot		Unknown	Unknown
Spotted Seatrout		Unknown	Unknown

Summary

Funding provided to the ASMFC, ACCSP, member States, NMFS, and the FWS through the Atlantic Coastal Act continues to be integral to realizing state and Federal alignment of fishery management and data collection programs. All beneficiaries of the funding have come to depend upon it for essential services as well as for short-term projects supporting immediate fishery management objectives. The projects are monitored closely by the NMFS Regional Program Offices via dedicated staff and online reporting and monitoring programs such as Grants Online (https://grantsonline.rdc.noaa.gov). Individual Atlantic Coastal Act project summary reports are available online at: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/state_federal/Reports.htm.

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