

ATLANTIC COASTAL FISHERIES COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT ACT



NATIONAL
MARINE
FISHERIES
SERVICE

FEDERAL ASSISTANCE REPORT
2009 – 2010



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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

National Marine Fisheries Service

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

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This report was prepared by:

Derek Orner, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Silver Spring, MD
Steve Meyers, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Silver Spring, MD

of the National Marine Fisheries Service

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 2009 AND 2010

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) 2009 and FY 2010 funding for the Atlantic Coastal Act. The review was conducted by the NMFS Headquarters' Office of Sustainable Fisheries. This report contains the following:

- 1) Funding process;
- 2) Project selection;
- 3) Total funding appropriated by Congress to implement the Atlantic Coastal Act for FY 2009 and FY 2010 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, per the appropriation process. 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 ASMFC, the three Atlantic fishery management councils, the 15 Atlantic states, PRFC, the DC Fisheries and Wildlife Division, NMFS, and FWS.



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 coastwide 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 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 2009 and FY 2010.

Table 1. Atlantic Coastal Act Grants for FY 2009 and 2010.

Recipient	Total Projects	FY 2009	FY 2010	Total
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission	1	1,900,000	1,900,000	3,800,000
Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program	1	1,425,000	1,425,000	2,850,000
Maine	1	205,261	207,885	413,146
New Hampshire	2	146,840	149,656	296,495
Massachusetts	1	238,206	245,534	483,740
Rhode Island	1	178,506	181,332	359,838
Connecticut	1	170,437	173,476	343,913
New York	2	194,541	198,548	393,089
New Jersey	1	226,735	231,441	458,176
Pennsylvania	1	111,407	113,600	225,007
Delaware	1	175,013	178,185	353,198
Maryland	2	188,794	196,176	384,969
Virginia	1	205,292	207,880	413,172
Potomac River Fisheries Commission	1	97,850	97,850	195,700
District of Columbia	1	38,000	38,000	76,000
North Carolina	1	209,922	212,315	422,237
South Carolina	3	158,885	162,157	321,042
Georgia	1	152,123	154,775	306,897
Florida	2	205,975	211,170	417,145
Total	25	6,228,787	6,284,978	12,513,765



Overview of Federal Usage of Funds

The NMFS and FWS utilize ACA funds (*Table 2*) to participate in quarterly ASMFC meetings, technical committee meetings, ACCSP meetings, program administration, and research.

Table 2. Federal Allocation of Atlantic Coastal Act Funding for FY 2009 and 2010.

Federal Allocation		FY 2009	FY 2010
NOAA Fisheries	Sustainable Fisheries	50,000	50,000
	Habitat Conservation	20,000	15,000
	Northeast Regional Office	215,000	58,000
	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	5,000
	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	99,995	99,995

Specifically, through FY2009 – 2010, the FWS utilized funds to implement activities to support the ACA.

- *Support of ASMFC process (FY2009 \$38,000; FY2010 \$30,000)* – Provided partial support for FWS personnel participation in the ASMFC process for the preparation and implementation of fishery management plans including technical committee and management board membership.
- *Roanoke River anadromous fish population characterization (FY2009 \$15,000; FY2010 \$15,000)* – Provided on-going hydroacoustic monitoring of anadromous fish populations in the Roanoke River, one of the least fragmented, most intact, bottomland hardwood ecosystems on the US east coast.
- *Tagging database for striped bass, Atlantic sturgeon and horseshoe crab recaptures (FY2009 \$15,000; FY2010 \$15,000)* – These cooperative efforts provided information for making management and restoration decisions. The striped bass program provides distribution, migration, and mortality data; Horseshoe crab program collects information on distribution, movement, longevity and mortality; and, Atlantic sturgeon program provides information for development of recovery and restoration plans.
- *American shad and Blueback herring habitat model development (FY2010 \$10,000)* – Provided support to complete habitat model development for use in the Albemarle Pamlico Estuary watershed.
- *Development of extended storage and cryo-preservation techniques for Atlantic sturgeon sperm (FY2010 \$3,000)* – Support allowed for the collection of milt samples from various coast-wide stocks of Atlantic sturgeon and use of new techniques for extending the viable storage time for raw samples along with cryo-preservation trials. This work increased the potential for readily available gametes for hatchery and restoration efforts.
- *Distribution, habitat use, age composition, and genetic analysis of Atlantic sturgeon in Virginia (FY2009 \$10,000; FY2010 \$12,000)* – This project used fishery independent data and reward program to obtain live specimens. Fish were tagged and sampled for genetics and age

information. The project provided essential biological and habitat information critical to restoring and protecting Atlantic sturgeon.

- *American shad population genetics (FY2009 \$10,000)* – Genetic analysis of multiple populations of American shad along the Atlantic coast would provide information about the interactions between these multiple populations and population differences can then be factored into stock assessment and restoration planning.
- *American shad and River herring restoration (FY2009 \$8,000; FY2010 \$15,000)* – The primary strategy employed for rebuilding stocks utilized pre-spawn trap and transfer of American shad and river herring from the Lawrence Dam fish lift and out-of-basin sources. The use of hatchery culture to increase production and speed stock rebuilding was implemented.
- *Diadromous fish monitoring project, Spicket River, Massachusetts (FY2009 \$4,000)* – the purpose of this project was to determine if diadromous fishes that previously returned to the Spicket River are still returning as far as the Stevens Pond dam since a flood (2006) required evacuation of over 2,000 families.

ASMFC and ACCSP



The ASMFC, including the ACCSP, received approximately 75 percent of their funding from the ACA. Together the ASMFC and the ACCSP employ 25 staff in their offices in Alexandria, VA. The ASMFC cooperatively manages over 27 stocks of marine fish from Maine to Florida. Of these 27 stocks, 12 are healthy or rebuilding. The ACCSP has grown to establish coastwide 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, or “SAFIS,” which is the principal electronic seafood dealer reporting system on the Atlantic coast.



Overview of FY 2009 and FY 2010 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, CT
Fisheries Research/Stock Assessment	MA, PA, NH, DE, FL, MD
Fisheries Data Collection/Analysis	GA, NC, CT, MA, NY, FL, PA, ME, SC, RI, NC, NH, DC
Fisheries Management Planning	GA, NY, NJ, RI, DE, MD, SC, PRFC



During the 2009-2010 period a total of 25 unique projects were funded (See Appendix A). Many projects cover multiple years. These projects enabled the ASMFC to facilitate consistency and information sharing on fish aging protocols, increased research on American lobster, continued the Gulf of Maine Northern Shrimp Trawl survey, conduct seven peer reviewed stock assessments, 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. 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 2009 and FY 2010

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 semiannual 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 States 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 22 species. Of those 22 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	Rebuilding Status & Schedule
Atlantic Herring		N	N	Rebuilt
Atlantic Striped Bass		N	N	Rebuilt
Black Seabass		N	N	Rebuilt
Bluefish		N	N	Rebuilt
Northern Shrimp		N	N	Rebuilt
Scup		N	N	Rebuilt
Spiny dogfish		N	N	Determined to be rebuilt in 2008 based on current level of stock abundance
American Lobster	Gulf of Maine (GOM)	N	N	GOM stock rebuilt
	Georges Bank (GBK)	N	N	GBK stock rebuilt
	Southern New England (SNE)	Y	N	Rebuilding program for SNE established in 2007; to be rebuilt by 2022
Atlantic Croaker		Unknown	N	Biomass has been increasing and age structure has been expanding since late 1980s
Spanish Mackerel		Unknown	N	Status based on 2008 benchmark assessment; continuing to rebuild until stock biomass reaches maximum sustainable yield
Summer Flounder		N	N	Based on SARC 47 results; to be rebuilt by 2013
Atlantic Menhaden		N	Y	Status based on 2009 benchmark assessment
Tautog		Y	N	Spawning stock biomass and fishing mortality targets and thresholds established in 2007; stock assessment update scheduled for 2011
Red Drum	Northern Region	Unknown	N	Spawning Potential Ratio above target and threshold
	Southern Region	Unknown	N	Spawning Potential Ratio above threshold
American Shad		Depleted	Unknown	Amendment 3 establishes 2012 moratorium unless sustainability can be documented
Weakfish		Depleted	N	6-year rebuilding period if Spawning Stock Biomass is below the threshold level; Board has approved further harvest restrictions based on 2009 benchmark assessment

Table 3. (cont.) Stock status for ASMFC managed species.

Species	Stock	Overfished	Overfishing	Rebuilding Status & Schedule
Winter Flounder	Gulf of Maine	Y	Y	
Winter Flounder	South New England/Mid-Atlantic	Y	Y	current biomass at 9% of SSB target
Coastal Sharks		Varies by species & species complex		No Rebuilding Schedule
American Eel		Unknown	Unknown	No rebuilding schedule; benchmark assessment and peer review scheduled for 2011
Atlantic Sturgeon		Y	N	40+ year moratorium; to be rebuilt by ~2038
Horseshoe Crab		Unknown	Unknown	No rebuilding schedule; 2010 assessment found New England and NY stocks to have declined, while DE Bay and Southeast stocks have increased over their respective time series
River Herring		Unknown	Unknown	Amendment 2 establishes 2012 moratorium unless sustainability can be documented; benchmark assessment and peer review scheduled for 2012
Spot		Unknown	Unknown	No rebuilding schedule; approval of Omnibus Amendment scheduled for 2011
Spotted Seatrout		Unknown	Unknown	No rebuilding schedule; approval of Omnibus Amendment scheduled for 2011

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.





**Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
Samuel D. Rauch**

www.nmfs.noaa.gov

**National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910**

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