



# *Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*

## NEWS RELEASE

*ASMFC Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 16, 2014

PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger  
703.842.0740

### **ASMFC Presents Annual Awards of Excellence**

Alexandria, VA - The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission presented Michael P. Luisi, Paul Caruso, Dr. Robert Latour, Cheri Patterson, and the state and federal members of the joint enforcement team Operation Lookout with its Annual Awards of Excellence for their outstanding contributions to fisheries management, science, and law enforcement along the Atlantic coast.



“Every year a great many people contribute to the success of fisheries management along the Atlantic

From left: ASMFC Executive Director Robert Beal, Cheri Patterson, Dr. Robert Latour, Michael Luisi, Paul Caruso, Sara Block, and ASMFC Chair Louis Daniel

coast. The Commission’s Annual Awards of Excellence recognize outstanding efforts by professionals who have made a difference in the way we manage and conserve our fisheries,” said ASMFC Chair Louis B. Daniel, III of the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries. “This evening, we honor several exceptional individuals for their contributions to the management and conservation of Atlantic coast fisheries.”

#### **Management & Policy Contributions**

##### *Michael Luisi, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Service*

Mr. Luisi has made significant contributions to the successful management of summer flounder and black sea bass fisheries throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. Active at the management level at both the Commission and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, he worked closely with staff, technical representatives, industry, and state and federal colleagues to develop and implement regional management approaches for both species. These approaches have allowed the states to maintain recreational black sea bass and summer flounder fisheries when existing policies would have resulted in severely curtailed or non-existent

---

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and diadromous species.

1050 N. Highland Street – Suite 200 A-N – Arlington, VA 22201  
703.842.0740 (phone) 703.842.0741 (fax) [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org)

fisheries. For black sea bass, that meant moving away from coastwide management toward a regional approach more suitable to their life history. For summer flounder, it meant moving away from conservation equivalency and the informal sharing of fish that were not otherwise harvested by other states into a more formal regional approach. These approaches have helped minimize the risk of overharvest while still providing headboats, charter boats, and anglers opportunities to fish. Mr. Luisi's efforts have benefited not only Maryland, but all states with summer flounder and black sea bass fisheries. Through his actions, Mr. Luisi has truly embodied the Commission's Mission "To promote the better utilization of the fisheries...of the Atlantic seaboard by the development of a joint program for the promotion and protection of such fisheries."

### **Scientific, Technical and Advisory Contributions**

#### ***Paul Caruso, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries***

Mr. Caruso has devoted nearly three decades to advancing the field of fisheries biology and stock assessments. He has been a tireless contributor to state, regional and coastwide fisheries management activities through his state tagging and fishery-dependent sampling projects, and his participation and chairmanship of numerous Commission and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council technical committees. In Massachusetts, Mr. Caruso has used his encyclopedic knowledge of fisheries to address a multitude of projects and species issues from oversight of the state's Marine Recreational Information Program project, to the conduct of tagging programs for striped bass and summer flounder, to his extensive outreach efforts to the recreational fishing community. Regionally and coastwide, Mr. Caruso's expertise and leadership have guided the development of numerous addenda and amendments for species such as striped bass, tautog, bluefish, black sea bass, summer flounder, and scup. He has helped advance stock assessments and the data upon which they are based through his work on cooperative tag and recapture programs, fish ageing protocols and sampling efforts, and improved biological monitoring requirements.

Throughout his entire career, Mr. Caruso has approached his work with enthusiasm and good humor, quickly embracing and accomplishing tasks. His goal has always been to supply managers with the information they need to properly manage fisheries. Mr Caruso's accomplishments are many and his efforts have been impactful to the countless fisheries biologists and staff he has mentored by sheer example.

#### ***Dr. Robert J. Latour, Virginia Institute of Marine Science***

Dr. Latour has made outstanding contributions to the science underpinning the management activities of the Commission. He has contributed to numerous benchmark stock assessments and stock assessment updates, and focused much of his research program and student mentorship on addressing specific research needs of various Mid-Atlantic fisheries. These latter efforts have led to a variety of important peer-reviewed manuscripts focused on improving striped bass tagging models; fish diet composition and community ecology; Atlantic menhaden feeding ecology; and disease epidemiology in Chesapeake Bay striped bass. Collectively, Dr. Latour's work has helped to further the ongoing efforts of various Commission technical committees and the longer term knowledge base used to aid our understanding of fisheries dynamics.

For the last 15 years, Dr. Latour has maintained an active role on Commission technical committees for Atlantic menhaden, striped bass tagging, multispecies assessment, and assessment science. He is co-principle investigator of the Chesapeake Bay Multispecies Monitoring and Assessment Program and the Northeast Area Monitoring and Assessment Program. These two relatively new data collection platforms are dedicated to improving the assessments of many Commission managed fisheries, including otherwise data-scarce assessments such as black drum and Atlantic sturgeon. The emergence of these new data sources is a testament to Dr. Latour's hard work and dedication to improving fisheries management along the Atlantic coast. A highly respected scientist, Dr. Latour's expertise is sought as an external peer reviewer

and as a member of the Mid-Atlantic Council's Science and Statistical Committee. In all that he does, Dr. Latour provides exemplary scientific expertise and sage advice in an effort to elevate the scientific rigor of our stock assessments and the information upon which fisheries management decisions are based.

***Cheri Patterson, New Hampshire Fish & Game Department***

Ms. Patterson has dedicated her 35 year career to not only improving the collection and use of fishery-dependent and independent data along the Atlantic coast, but also to the conservation and protection of diadromous fish habitat. She began her career working for the New Hampshire Fish & Game Department as a member of the scientific crew for the Gulf of Maine Northern Shrimp Survey. Today, this survey represents one of the longest running cooperative state/federal research surveys along the Atlantic coast, and forms the basis for the assessment and management of the northern shrimp resource. She played an integral role in the development of Amendment 2 to the Northern Shrimp Plan and has been a longstanding and engaged member of the Commission's Shad & River Herring Technical Committee and Management & Science Committee. Ms. Patterson has also been a passionate participant in the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program at all levels of the Program since its inception in the mid-1990s and currently serves as Chair of the ACCSP Coordinating Council. She was the driving force in developing and implementing ACCSP-compliant lobster harvester and dealer reporting systems in New Hampshire.

In recent years, Ms. Patterson has become increasingly involved in diadromous fish monitoring and habitat restoration, participating on the Commission's Habitat Committee and Fish Passage Committee, as well as the Steering Committee for the Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership. A notable crowning achievement in Ms. Patterson's work on diadromous fish restoration came with her leadership in overseeing the removal of two head of tide dams in rivers of New Hampshire's Great Bay Estuary.

**Law Enforcement Contributions**

***Operation Lookout Members – Captain John Croft and Special Investigator Jimmy Simpson, Virginia Marine Police; Special Agents Sara Block, Tracey Woodruff, and Steven Niemi, NOAA Office of Law Enforcement; and Trial Attorney James Nelson, U.S. Department of Justice***

Members of the joint state/federal law enforcement team of Operation Lookout investigated and documented the poaching of striped bass in the exclusive economic zone off the coast of Virginia. In order to obtain the proper evidence and documentation, Operation Lookout conducted high risk undercover operations in an extremely dangerous environment. Their undercover efforts, led to the indictment of five individuals with several charges applied to each individual. Finalization of this operation is still pending given that some of the individuals have confessed to felonies but have not been sentenced while others have not been adjudicated or had a plea agreement entered. As this operation's prosecution comes to a close, it is fitting that the Commission recognize the sacrifice and due diligence of the members of Operation Lookout in protecting migratory striped bass populations for the benefit of all fishermen along the Atlantic coast.

###