

# Monthly Highlights

May - July, 2011



## NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE

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## NORTHEAST REGION, HABITAT CONSERVATION DIVISION

### GLOUCESTER FIELD OFFICE, GLOUCESTER, MA

#### NOAA APPROVES RHODE ISLAND OCEAN SPECIAL AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

On July 22, NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco and Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Chafee gathered at the University of Rhode Island to recognize NOAA's approval of the Rhode Island Ocean Special Area Management Plan (SAMP). With NOAA's approval of the state's Ocean SAMP under the federal Coastal Zone Management Act, Rhode Island became the first state to have incorporated a comprehensive ocean special area management plan in its coastal zone management program. This approval means that enforceable policies in the Ocean SAMP for protecting existing activities such as fishing, important habitats and archaeological resources, and identifying areas suitable for energy projects, may be applied to federal actions in federal waters. This plan, developed over two years, identifies existing uses and sensitive areas and incorporates new data collected in waters off the coast of Rhode Island. In the development of the Ocean SAMP, the state of Rhode Island initiated an extensive public process and stakeholder involvement. NMFS HCD staff provided technical assistance during the development of the Ocean SAMP on issues related to marine habitat and fisheries resources. The plan covers topics including renewable energy and other offshore development, marine transportation and infrastructure, fisheries resources and fishing activity, cultural and historic resources, and global climate change. Dr. Lubchenco held a town hall meeting for NOAA staff and others following the signing of the Ocean SAMP at the NOAA Narragansett Laboratory. For more information and to

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review the Ocean SAMP go to:  
<http://seagrant.gso.uri.edu/oceansamp/>.  
([Susan.Tuxbury@noaa.gov](mailto:Susan.Tuxbury@noaa.gov), 978/  
281-9176)

### **2010 NOAA FISHERIES TEAM MEMBER OF THE YEAR**

Jenna Flynn, a contractor through Integrated Statistics and working with HCD, was presented with the 2010 NOAA Fisheries Team Member of the Year Award in the Program Management/Scientific/Technical category. The award is for members of the workforce who are not NOAA employees, for their contributions to the ability of the agency to fulfill its mission goals in support of the stewardship of the nation's living marine resources, as recognized by their NOAA Fisheries peers. She was honored for her demonstrated efforts in the protection of essential fish habitat and maintaining stronger connections with regulatory partners.  
([Jenna.Flynn@noaa.gov](mailto:Jenna.Flynn@noaa.gov), 978 /675-2176)

### **WEST RIVER TIDAL RESTORATION PROJECT**

HCD staff reviewed and commented on the Connecticut Fund for the Environment's permit application for the West River tidal restoration project in New Haven, CT. The project received funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and NOAA's Restoration Center for the improvement of river herring passage and access to spawning habitat. With the removal of existing one-way tide gates and the installation of eleven self-regulating tide gates, upstream tidal flow will be improved, allowing greater access for migrating river

herring, including blueback herring and alewives. The project will open approximately 5.8 miles of river habitat and restore approximately 50 acres of degraded tidal marsh. In 2006, river herring were identified as "Species of Concern" due to declining populations from dams and other impediments, habitat degradation and fishing and bycatch. HCD staff recommended that no unconfined in-water work take place during the river herring upstream migration and spawning period to minimize impacts during the construction period. The recommendation was provided to ensure the tide date replacement does not further restrict access for the migratory fish and that the objectives of the project are met. ([Jenna.Flynn@noaa.gov](mailto:Jenna.Flynn@noaa.gov), 978 /675-2176)

### **RESTORATION SUCCESS IN SEDGEUNKEDUNK STREAM**

Fisheries and habitat restoration efforts on the Sedgeunkedunk Stream in Brewer, Maine, have proven effective based on recent survey results. The Sedgeunkedunk Stream, a small tributary of the Penobscot River, has benefited from two major actions in recent years. The Town of Brewer agreed to remove the first dam on the stream as part of a suite of mitigation actions to compensate for riverine and wetland impacts along the Penobscot River. The dam was ultimately removed in 2009. In addition, a rock ramp was constructed at the second dam on the stream at the outlet to Fields Pond in 2008. Monitoring of the stream has identified various year classes of Atlantic salmon parr, spawning sea lamprey, spawning adult alewife, and out-migrating juvenile alewife. The successful restoration and associated monitoring is a collective effort of NOAA Fisheries, USFWS, and the University of Maine.  
([Sean.Mcdermott@noaa.gov](mailto:Sean.Mcdermott@noaa.gov), 978/ 281-9113)

### **NOAA FISH PASSAGE TRAINING COURSE**

The NMFS Northeast region (NER) and the Southeast region (SER) co-hosted a fish passage training course for east coast participants at UMASS Amherst from May 2 - 6. The course instructors included NOAA Northwest Region (NWR) engineers who traveled to Amherst, MA to give the training to east coast NMFS biologists and engineers as well as state representatives and members of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) fish passage workgroup. The NWR served as the primary instructors, though presentations were also provided by representatives of the USFWS, NMFS NER, and the USGS Conte Laboratory. The course involved three and a half days of classroom work, with one evening session covering case studies, as well as a one-day field trip to nearby hydroelectric facilities that use fishways and fish lifts to pass alewife, blueback herring, American shad, American eel, and Atlantic salmon. The fish

passage training covered various ways diadromous fishes can be passed upstream and downstream of hydroelectric facilities and included a half day session on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission hydro relicensing process. It was beneficial to learn about the criteria and standards used on the west coast and examine how these differ from existing practices on the east coast. The differences in criteria and standards brought about a number of significant discussions. These discussions were further benefited from participation by state representatives. In addition to learning more technical specifications related to fish passage, this course provided valuable information for the east coast to strategize on how to approach FERC projects moving forward. ([Susan.Tuxbury@noaa.gov](mailto:Susan.Tuxbury@noaa.gov), 978/ 281-9176)

### SANDY HOOK FIELD OFFICE, HIGHLANDS, NJ

#### MID-ATLANTIC FIELD OFFICES SUPERVISOR RETIRES

Stanley Gorski, the supervisor for HCD's Mid-Atlantic field offices retired from government service on July 1, 2011. Stan worked from HCD since 1974 and was located in the Sandy Hook field office at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's James J. Howard Laboratory in Highlands, NJ. He supervised staff in the Gloucester, MA; Milford, CT; Sandy Hook; Annapolis, MD and Gloucester Point, VA field offices. ([Karen.Greene@noaa.gov](mailto:Karen.Greene@noaa.gov), 732/ 872-3023)

#### DELAWARE RIVER BASIN FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT COOPERATIVE (Co-op) FISHERIES TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (Tech Committee)

Staff from the HCD Sandy Hook field office and members of the Co-op's Tech Committee met with the Philadelphia District Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) to present the final draft of the revisions to Co-op's 1992 Policy Document, "*Dredging, Blasting and Overboard Disposal in the Delaware River Basin.*" The draft was the key foundation and source document for the seasonal restrictions for in-water port improvement and navigation channel maintenance activities in the Delaware River. The updated document incorporates recent State sampling data and species population information to support the revisions to the seasonal restrictions that were approved by the Co-op Policy Committee in 2002. Additional interagency meeting are anticipated to finalize the document.

([Brian.C.May@noaa.gov](mailto:Brian.C.May@noaa.gov), 732/ 872-3116 or [Karen.Greene@noaa.gov](mailto:Karen.Greene@noaa.gov), 732/ 872-3023)

#### NATIONWIDE PERMITS

HCD staff from Sandy Hook and Milford met with ACOE's staff from the New York and Philadelphia Districts and the North Atlantic Division to discuss the reissuance of the existing nationwide permits and the issuance of two new nationwide permits. Staff from the US Fish and Wildlife Service also attended. The purpose of the meeting was to review the existing the regional conditions for New Jersey, New York, and Delaware and to discuss modifications needed to increase protection of NOAA resources. Coordination on the regional condition is on-going. A document incorporating the results of the meeting is expected from the ACOE in the near future. HCD staff also reviewed the EFH assessment and regional conditions prepared by the Baltimore District ACOE for activities in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Washington, DC and certain military installations in Virginia. Comments on the document were provided to the ACOE. (For NJ, DE, and PA contact [Karen.Greene@noaa.gov](mailto:Karen.Greene@noaa.gov), 732/ 872-3023; for NY contact [Diane.Rusanowsky@noaa.gov](mailto:Diane.Rusanowsky@noaa.gov), 203/ 882-6504; and for PA and MD contact [John.Nichols@noaa.gov](mailto:John.Nichols@noaa.gov), 410/ 267- 5675)

#### WIND ENERGY

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE) issued the New Jersey Call for Information and Nominations – Commercial Leasing for Wind Power on the Outer Continental Shelf Offshore New Jersey on April, 20, 2011. The Call

itself is not a leasing announcement, but the area described in the notice maybe subject to future leasing. The area under consideration for commercial leasing is located off the coast of New Jersey beginning approximately seven nautical miles (nm) from the shore, extending roughly 22 nm seaward to the approximate 100 ft depth contour, and extending 45 nm parallel to the Federal/State boundary between Avalon and Barnegat Light. This area is approximately 418 square nm and contains 43 whole OCS blocks and 34 partial OCS blocks. It was delineated in consultation with BOEMRE/New Jersey Renewable Energy Task Force and has been identified as a Wind Energy Area (WEA) as referenced and described in the Secretary of Interior's *Smart from the Start* OCS renewable energy initiative. HCD and PRD staff, with the assistance of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center and several Northeast Regional Office divisions, provided BOEMRE with information on NOAA trust resources and fishing activities that occur in the area, as well as the interagency consultations required under the Magnuson Stevens Act and the Endangered Species Act. ([Karen.Greene@noaa.gov](mailto:Karen.Greene@noaa.gov), 732/ 872-3023 or [Julie.Crocker@noaa.gov](mailto:Julie.Crocker@noaa.gov), 978/ 281-8480 for PRD)

## **FEDERAL EMERGENCY REGULATORY COMMISSION (FERC) COORDINATION**

HCD staff hosted a meeting between FERC's Division of Hydropower Licensing, the New York and Philadelphia Districts and the North Atlantic Division of the ACOE, HCD staff from Milford and Gloucester, and the US EPA. Topics discussed at the meeting included the FERC's permitting and licensing process for in-stream hydrokinetic projects, the ACOE's permit process and how to improve coordination and the integration of the two processes. ([Karen.Greene@noaa.gov](mailto:Karen.Greene@noaa.gov), 732/ 872-3023 or [Diane.Rusanowsky@noaa.gov](mailto:Diane.Rusanowsky@noaa.gov), 203/ 882-6504)

## **GLOUCESTER POINT FIELD OFFICE, GLOUCESTER POINT, VA**

### **CRANEY ISLAND SHORELINE PROTECTION PROJECT, PORTSMOUTH, VA**

The Norfolk District ACOE has developed a Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) that includes an Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) assessment for the proposed shoreline protection of the ACOE's Craney Island Dredge Material Management Area (CIDMMA) located on the Elizabeth River in the City of Portsmouth, Virginia. Operated by the Norfolk District ACOE Operations Branch, CIDMMA is a 2,500 acre facility that accepts uncontaminated navigationally related dredge material from waterways in Hampton Roads. Existing CIDMMS site conditions include vast amounts of broken concrete rubble and significant erosion along portions of the facility. The proposed shoreline protection project, to be constructed in phases over 10 years as funding is made available, will include approximately twenty near-shore stone breakwaters with sand back-fill along approximately 5,200 linear feet of shoreline on the Northern and Western sides of CIDMMA. To help offset impacts to open water and tidal wetland habitats, the ACOE has proposed incorporating over 11 acres of vegetated and non-vegetated tidal wetland creation into the shoreline protection project. Virginia field office staff has provided preliminary comment on the draft EFH assessment and will continue to work with the Norfolk District ACOE Operations Branch personnel to develop a comprehensive compensation strategy for unavoidable impacts to EFH. ([David.L.O'Brien@noaa.gov](mailto:David.L.O'Brien@noaa.gov), 804/ 684-7828)