



Unmanaged Forage Omnibus Amendment



Annapolis, MD
December 8, 2015

Outline

- FMAT progress on list of species
- Draft statement of purpose and range of alternatives
- Next steps

Objectives

- Feedback on FMAT progress to date
- Recommendations for ways to prioritize list of forage species

List of Species

- Work in progress
- 264 taxa (species and higher-level classifications such as families)
- Built from:
 - NEFSC Food Habits database
 - Scoping comments
 - FMAT literature review



Atlantic silverside (D. Fletcher)

Food Habits Database

- Stomach contents from NEFSC bottom trawl surveys
- FMAT query
 - 1973-2015
 - Spring and fall surveys
 - Offshore strata in the Mid-Atlantic

List of Species

Information to help prioritize taxa:

- Important in diet of 11 Council-managed predators?
 - “Important” = $>0.1\%$ of relative mean stomach weight
- Potentially important in diet of other predators in the Mid-Atlantic?
 - “Potentially important” = $>0.001\%$ of relative mean stomach weight = documented in >2 stomachs

List of Species

Information to help prioritize taxa:

- Adults commonly >25 cm?
- Level of classification too broad?
- Future directed fishery possible?
- Mentioned in scoping?

List of Species

In progress:

- Potentially important to Council-managed predators
- Presence in Mid-Atlantic (common vs. rare)
- Inshore vs. offshore
- Presence in diet of marine mammals (maybe)



Bay anchovy (Nicholls State University)

Species Prioritization

FMAT recommends prioritization based on:

- Importance to Mid-Atlantic predators
 - Council-managed – high priority
 - Others – lesser priority
- Presence in Mid-Atlantic federal waters
- Possibility of a directed fishery



Sand Lance (Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada)

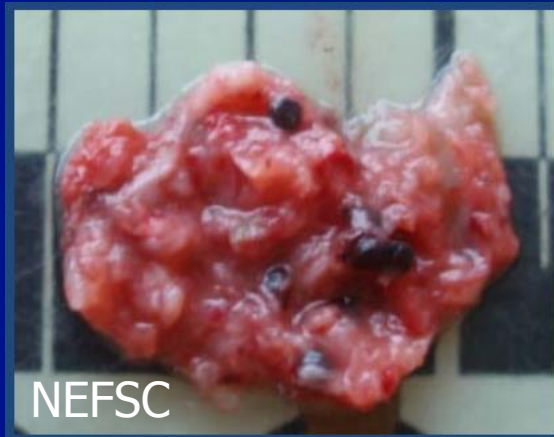
Species Prioritization

As of 11-30-15, FMAT identified:

- 28 taxa as likely good candidates for inclusion in amendment
- 129 taxa as possibly good candidates
- 107 taxa as not likely good candidates

List of Species - Caveats

- Limitations of stomach content data
- Limitations of trawl survey data
- Food Habits queries focused on offshore strata
- Expert judgement used to determine if fishery possible or group too broadly classified



List of Species

FMAT recommendations:

- Maintain a broad list of taxa until after public hearings
- Include some family-level groupings

List of Species

Today:

- Council recommendations for prioritization
- Feedback on FMAT process to date

Next step:

- Ecosystem and Ocean Planning Committee meeting, Jan 2016, to develop list for public hearing document

DRAFT RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

Draft Purpose Statement

“To use the Council’s discretionary authority to prohibit the development of new or expansion of existing directed fisheries on unmanaged forage species in the Mid-Atlantic.”

Draft Purpose Statement

FMAT comments on purpose statement:

- “Discretionary authority” includes ecosystem component species, but not stocks in the fishery
- Can elaborate in relevant documents that intent is to prohibit fishing “until adequate scientific information is available to promote ecosystem sustainability”

Draft Alternatives

1. No action
2. Prohibit harvest
3. Limit capture
4. Administrative alternatives

Alt. 2: Prohibit Harvest

2a: Prohibit all possession

2b: Prohibit directed fishing, but allow an incidental possession limit

2c: Prohibit all possession once a catch limit (e.g. an annual catch or landings limit) is met

Alt. 2: Prohibit Harvest

FMAT comments on alternative 2:

- Some alternatives will be better for some species/taxa than others
- Prohibiting all possession would limit ability to collect data, unless exempted fishing permits (EFPs) also issued
- Catch limits are difficult to monitor and will be difficult to set at appropriate level with available data

Alt. 3: Limit Capture

3a: Spatial closures

3b: Seasonal closures

3c: Gear regulations



Bay anchovy (VIMS)

Alt. 3: Limit Capture

FMAT Comments on alternative 3:

- May have limited data to implement and evaluate spatial and/or seasonal closures
- Gear regulations may be more effective for some species/taxa than others

Alt. 4: Administrative

4a: Modify list of approved fisheries and gear types (50 CF 600.725)

4b: Frameworkable items

- i: List of ecosystem component species
- ii: Spatial and seasonal closures (if any)
- iii: Gear regulations (if any)
- iv: Possession limits (if any)

Other FMAT comments

- National Standard Guidelines provide flexibility on use of EC designation
- Council has an opportunity to define what it means to be an EC in the Mid-Atlantic
 - Limit fishing pressure?
 - A priority for research and/or monitoring?
 - Anything else?



Next Steps

- Further develop list of species
 - Ecosystem and Ocean Planning Committee meeting, late January 2016 (proposed)
- Further develop alternatives, initiate analysis of impacts
- Approve public hearing document, Feb 2016
- Public hearings, spring 2016 (proposed)

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Questions?