

SEG Striped Bass Committee Meeting Summary

Date: January 8, 2001

Time: 12:30 P.M.

Place: USACOE Savannah District Office

Attendance Record:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Ted Will | GADNR |
| Terry Stratton | USACE |
| Bill Bailey | USACE |
| John Robinette | USFWS |
| Ed Eudaly | USFWS |
| Larry Keegan | Lockwood Greene |
| Bo Elis | ATM |
| Tom Reinert | UGA-Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit |

The Striped Bass Committee met following the USACE 1135 Back River Restoration meeting on 8 January 2001. Many details involving UGA's striped bass research were discussed beforehand in the 1135 meeting. A report for the UGA study "Assessment of spawning sites and Reproductive Status of Striped Bass in the Savannah River Estuary" funded by GPA will be issued at the end of January 2001. Given this circumstance, it was decided to refrain from a full discussion of findings until everyone has had a chance to review the report. However, the committee briefly discussed the following two questions: 1) do we need additional biological studies, and 2) what criteria will be needed to evaluate present studies within the GPA framework?

Biological Studies

Ted Will brought up the idea of releasing additional gellan beads under higher spring discharges. Ted and Tom mentioned that studies performed by UGA have determined relationships between the number of eggs needed at large in the Savannah River Estuary (SRE) before their standardized egg sampling gear can collect one; however, these studies were conducted in low discharge years (1999 and 2000). Data collected under "normal" flows may provide additional insight into gear sampling efficiencies and detection thresholds. These data may also help clarify comparisons of current egg detection thresholds as compared to historical egg data collected under higher discharges.

Ted Will was interested in the possibility of ATM modeling gellan bead transport under "normal" discharge years, and have UGA ground truth ATM's model with their gellan bead work. The committee discussed that this could be accomplished but would take some time to figure out how to run the model (i.e., how would river substrates influence bead transport, how to distribute beads into the model independently, etc.). It was also pointed out that we would need to decide exactly what data is needed from the model before model runs take place. The information would help determine egg transport, egg distribution pathways, and help strengthen UGA's standardized egg sampling efficiencies and detection thresholds.

Bo Elis mentioned the possibility of ATM performing Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP) velocity transects over potential striped bass spawning sites. Ted Will mentioned that UGA and GA-DNR captured several (>10) large (> 9 kg) striped bass on a shallow sandy flat near river mile 26 on the Savannah River in the spring of 2000. It is possible these fish use this area for spawning. To that end, it was discussed that ADCP transects taken in this location could be used to compare this site to other available spawning habitat in the Front, Middle, and Back rivers.

Committee consensus to the merits of the above reference discussions will be determined at a later date. Due to potential low flows, the value of any studies performed in spring 2001 was questioned.

Criteria

It seemed appropriate to meet again in early March after everyone has reviewed the UGA report and had time to digest the idea of "where are we in the study process". A list of questions and potential data needed to answer those questions would help facilitate the March meeting.