



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

*Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations of all Atlantic coast fish species, or successful restoration
well in progress by the year 2015*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ASMFC American Lobster Board Approves Addendum XVI *Addendum Establishes New Reference Points for 3 Stock Units*

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s American Lobster Management Board has approved Addendum XVI to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. The Addendum establishes new reference points for the three lobster stocks and modifies procedures for adopting and implementing new reference points.

Addendum XVI establishes a four-tiered approach to define abundance reference points in the Gulf of Maine (GOM) and Georges Bank (GBK), a four-tiered approach to define exploitation reference points for all three stock units, and a three-tiered approach to define abundance reference points for Southern New England (SNE). The Board set the SNE abundance reference points to a lower target level than the GOM and GBK stocks because it believes the SNE stock has limited ability to rebuild to higher historical levels. Members of the Board believe that environmental and ecosystem changes have reduced the resource’s ability to rebuild to historical levels.

Based on these new reference points, GOM abundance is in favorable condition and exploitation falls in the middle of the range. GBK abundance and exploitation are in favorable condition. The SNE abundance estimate is below the reference point limit and requires Board action to rebuild the stock.

The Addendum also broadens definitions for status determination criteria for the three stock units, allowing for greater flexibility in incorporating changes to the reference point definitions as science and assessment methodologies evolve. Changes to reference points may now be made through Board action (versus addendum) following a peer-reviewed stock assessment. A more detailed overview of the Addendum’s new reference points and stock status by assessment area will be available on the Commission’s website under Breaking News by May 21.

In response to the condition of the SNE stock, the Board initiated the development of a draft addendum to address stock declines, including a range of alternatives from no action to a moratorium. The Board intends to meet in SNE area in July to review the document and consider sending it out for public comment. A subsequent press release will be issued once the details of the July Board meeting have been set. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator for Management, at tkerns@asmfc.org or at (202) 289-6400.

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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 anadromous species.

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