



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*

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ASMFC South Atlantic Board Approves Addendum I to the Atlantic Croaker FMP

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board has approved Addendum I to Amendment I to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Croaker. The Addendum changes the management unit to one region (New Jersey through the east coast of Florida) and modifies the biological reference points used to assess stock condition.

Both measures stem from the recommendations of the 2010 benchmark assessment, which indicates that Atlantic croaker is not experiencing overfishing. Based on the findings of the assessment, Atlantic croaker is now considered to be a single stock on the Atlantic coast. The previous stock assessment, which formed the basis of Amendment 1, divided the stock into Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic regions and assessed the resource separately in the two regions due to difficulty assessing the resource as a single unit. The 2010 assessment used data from both regions to produce a single, coastwide assessment.

Addendum I also modifies the biological reference points (BRPs) used to assess stock condition since the results of the 2010 assessment cannot be compared to the Amendment 1 BRPs, which are specific to the Mid-Atlantic region only. Addendum I’s BRPs are very similar to those in Amendment 1. They use the same definitions for the targets and thresholds (e.g., fishing mortality rate threshold = F_{MSY}), but they differ in that absolute estimates of spawning stock biomass (SSB) and fishing mortality (F) are not estimated. Estimates are not given because of uncertainty in the assessment resulting from inadequate data on the magnitude of croaker discards in the South Atlantic shrimp trawl fishery. The determination of stock status is thus based on the ratios of F and SSB to their respective target and threshold, which are compared to one.

The new targets and thresholds are:

$$F \text{ target} = 0.75 * F_{MSY}$$

$$F \text{ threshold} = F_{MSY}$$

$$SSB \text{ target} = SSB_{MSY}$$

$$SSB \text{ threshold} = 0.70 * SSB_{MSY}$$

If F/F_{MSY} is greater than 1, then overfishing is occurring. If $SSB/(0.70 * SSB_{MSY})$ is less than 1, the stock is overfished (see Figures 1 and 2). In other words, F must be lower than its threshold, and SSB must be higher than its threshold, or the stock will be considered to be experiencing overfishing or be in an

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.

overfished condition, respectively. The targets would still represent the levels that management measures are designed to achieve.

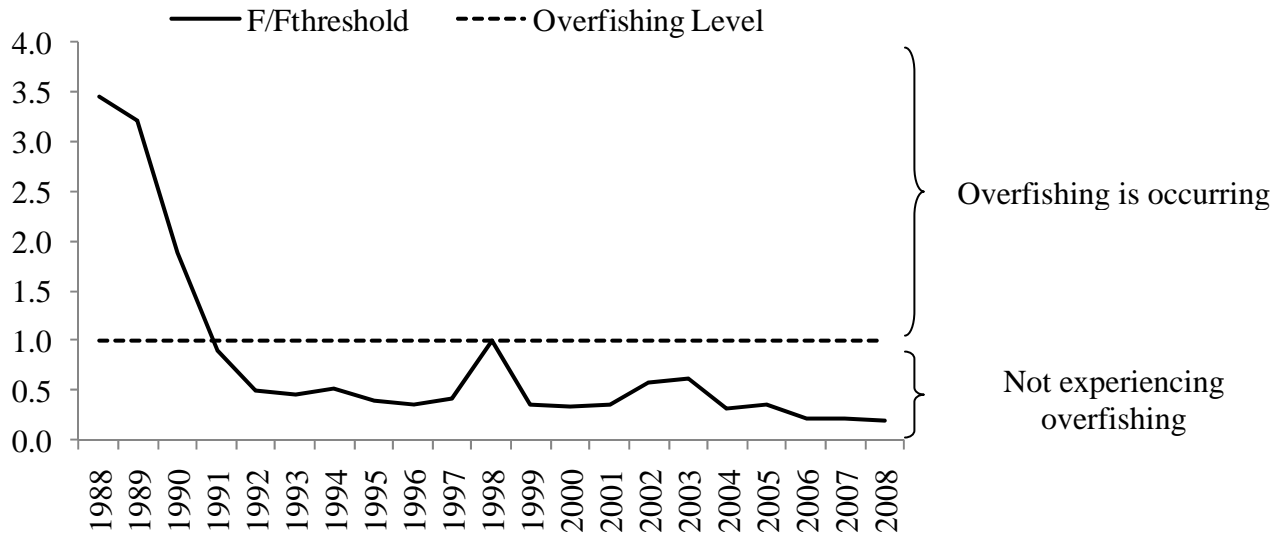


Figure 1. The ratio of F to F_{MSY} (the F threshold). If the ratio is less than 1.0, the stock is not experiencing overfishing.

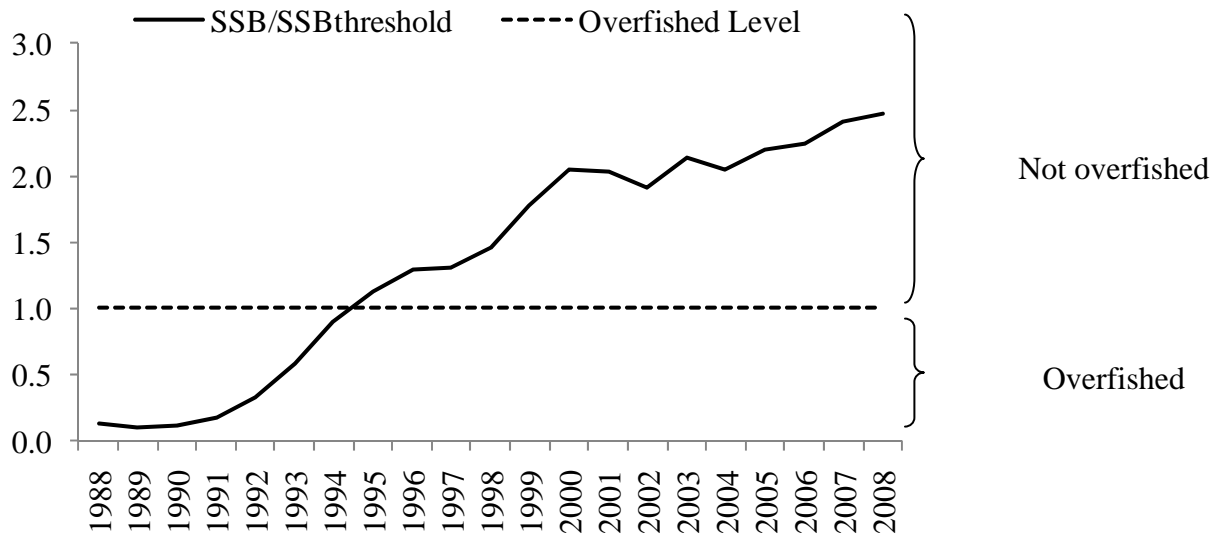


Figure 2. The ratio of SSB to $0.70 \cdot SSB_{MSY}$ (the SSB threshold). If the ratio is more than 1.0, the stock is not overfished.

Copies of Addendum I will be available on the Commission’s website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News by the end of March. For more information, please contact Danielle Brzezinski, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at dbrzezinski@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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