



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

ASMFC Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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ASMFC South Atlantic Board Initiates Draft Addendum to Address Management of Atlantic Croaker and Spot

Alexandria, VA –The Commission’s South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board has initiated the development of a Draft Addendum to the Fishery Management Plans for Spot and Atlantic Croaker. The Draft Addendum will propose replacing the current trigger analysis with the use of a traffic light approach in determining management measures for both species along the coast. The Draft Addendum will also include options that will allow for conservation equivalency measures to achieve reductions in catch and harvest when needed.

The Board initiated the Draft Addendum in response to concerns over trends in the spot and Atlantic croaker fisheries. The current management of Atlantic croaker and spot compares annual changes in various trigger indices (recent landings and survey information) for each non-assessment year to review trends in the fisheries. The results of the most recent trigger analysis found declines in the commercial and recreational landings for both Atlantic croaker and spot fisheries but did not trip the triggers. The Technical Committee was concerned that the current triggers do not illustrate long-term trends in the stocks and lack specific and timely management responses.

The traffic light approach has been used as a precautionary framework for fisheries with limited data to allow for a reasonable level of resource management. The name comes from assigning a color (red, yellow, or green) to categorize relative levels of indicators on the condition of the fish population or fishery. The approach provides a clear illustration of the trends in the fishery and the need for management action. This method has been developed for use in the blue crab fisheries of North Carolina and Georgia.

The proposed traffic light approach is expected to be an interim approach until the completion of the next stock assessment for both species. The Draft Addendum will be presented to the Board for consideration and approval in May 2014. For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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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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