



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

ASMFC Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 15, 2014

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ASMFC South Atlantic Board Approves Spot and Atlantic Croaker Draft Addendum for Public Comment *Draft Addendum Explores Use of a Traffic Light Approach to Assess Stock Condition and Initiate Management Response*

Alexandria, VA –The Commission’s South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board approved a Draft Addendum to both the Spot and Atlantic Croaker Fishery Management Plans (FMP) for public comment. The Board initiated the development of new management options in response to concerns over trends in the spot and Atlantic croaker fisheries and the extent of bycatch and discards of both species in the shrimp trawl fishery. The Draft Addendum proposes a new method (Traffic Light Approach, TLA) to evaluate the status of the fisheries and potential coastwide or state-specified management actions (e.g. bag limits, size restrictions, time & area closures, and gear restrictions) based on the annual fisheries evaluation.

The TLA 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, which can help clearly illustrate trends in the fishery. The current management of Atlantic croaker and spot compares annual changes in various indices (e.g. recent landings and survey information) to review trends in the fisheries. The most recent review found declines in the commercial and recreational landings for both Atlantic croaker and spot fisheries. However, there is concern that this annual review does not illustrate long-term trends in the stock nor does it include specific management measures to implement in response to declines in the stock or fishery.

The 2010 Atlantic croaker stock assessment indicated that overfishing is not occurring, while the stock status of spot is currently unknown. As both spot and Atlantic croaker are scheduled for benchmark stock assessments in 2016, the management options proposed in the Draft Addendum are intended to provide an interim approach until the benchmark assessments for both species are completed.

It is anticipated that several states will be conducting public hearings on the Draft Addendum throughout the summer. A subsequent press release will announce the availability of Draft Addendum as well as the details of the scheduled hearings. The Board will meet in August to review submitted public input and consider final approval of the Addendum. For more information, please contact, Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator at 703.842.0740 or krootes-murdy@asmfc.org. PR14-16

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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