



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

ASMFC Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
703.842.0740

States Schedule Public Hearings on Spot & Atlantic Croaker Draft Addendum *Addenda Seek Input on Use of a Traffic Light Approach to Assess Stock Condition and Initiate Management Response*

Arlington, VA – The Atlantic coast states of Maryland through Georgia have scheduled their hearings to gather public comment on the Draft Addendum to both the Spot and Atlantic Croaker Fishery Management Plans for public comment. The dates, times, and locations of the scheduled hearings follow.

Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources

June 12, 2014 at 6 PM
C-1 Conference Room
580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Contact: Harry Rickabaugh at 410.643.6785

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

June 17, 2014 at 6 PM
Central District Office
5285 Highway 70 West
Morehead City, North Carolina 28557
Contact: Michelle Duvall at 252.808.8011

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

June 16, 2014 at 6 PM
2600 Washington Avenue
4th Floor Conference Room
Newport News, Virginia
Contact: Joe Grist at 757.247.2237

Georgia Coastal Resources Division

June 18, 2014 at 5:30 PM
Susan Shipman Environmental Education Building
One Conservation Way
Brunswick, Georgia
Contact: Pat Geer at 912.264.7218

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

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.

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.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Spot and Atlantic Croaker Draft Addendum, either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. The Draft Addendum is available on the Commission website on the Public Input page. It can also be accessed directly at

http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/538635a6DraftSpotCroaker_Addenda_PublicComment_May2014.pdf.

Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM (EST) on July 2, 2014** and should be forwarded to Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (fax) or via email at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org (Subject line: Croaker/Spot Draft Addendum).

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