Atlantic Coastal States Schedule Public Hearings on Striped Bass Draft Addendum IV

Arlington, VA – The Atlantic coastal states and jurisdictions have scheduled their hearings to gather public comment on Draft Addendum IV to Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass. The dates, times, and locations of the scheduled hearings follow.

**Maine Department of Marine Resources**
*September 4, 2014; 6-9 PM*
Orion Performing Arts Center
MSAD#75, Mt. Ararat Middle School
66 Republic Avenue
Topsham, Maine
Contact: Terry Stockwell at 207.624.6553

**New Hampshire Fish and Game**
*August 27, 2014; 7 PM*
Urban Forestry Center
45 Elwyn Road
Portsmouth, New Hampshire
Contact: Doug Grout at 603.868.1095

**Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries**
*September 2, 2014; 10 AM*
Nantucket Community Room
4 Fairgrounds Road
Nantucket, Massachusetts
Contact: Jared Silva at 617.626.1534

*September 2, 2014; 6 PM*
Massachusetts Maritime Academy
Admiral’s Hall, 101 Academy Drive
Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts

**Rhode Island Division of Fish & Wildlife**
*September 17, 2014 at 6 PM*
University of Rhode Island, Corless Auditorium
South Ferry Road
Narragansett, Rhode Island
Contact: Nicole Lengyel at 401.423.1940

Contact: Jared Silva at 617.626.1534
*MA DMF will also be seeking public comment on Spiny Dogfish Draft Addendum V at this hearing*

*September 3, 2014; 6 PM*
MA DMF Annisquam River Station
30 Emerson Avenue
Gloucester, Massachusetts
Contact: Jared Silva at 617.626.1534
*MA DMF will also be seeking public comment on Spiny Dogfish Draft Addendum V at this hearing*

*September 4, 2014; 6 PM*
Viking Club
410 Quincy Avenue (Route 53)
Braintree, Massachusetts
Contact: Jared Silva at 617.626.1534

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 diadromous species.
The Draft Addendum proposes new fishing mortality (F) reference points, as recommended by the 2013 benchmark stock assessment, and associated management measures to reduce F to a level at or below the proposed target within one or three years. It responds to results of the 2013 Atlantic striped bass benchmark assessment indicating F in 2012 was above the proposed F target, and female spawning stock biomass (SSB) has been steadily declining below the target since 2006. This means even though the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring, SSB is approaching its overfished threshold and stock projections show SSB will likely fall below the threshold in the coming years. In addition, a similar
decline has been observed in total harvest. In response to these factors, the Draft Addendum proposes management options to reduce fishing mortality to the target level.

The Draft Addendum includes a suite of management options to reduce recreational and commercial harvest along the coast and in the Chesapeake Bay under three reduction timeframes. The timeframes include (1) reducing F to its target in one year with a 25% reduction in 2013 harvest in 2015 (2) reducing F to its target within three years with a 17% reduction in 2013 harvest in 2015, and (3) reducing F to its target within three years with a 7% sequential reduction in harvest for three consecutive years starting in 2015. Specific options to be considered include bag, size, slot and trophy size limits for the recreational fishery and quota reductions for the commercial fishery.

Given the Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River (A/R) stock of striped bass contributes minimally to the coastwide complex when compared to the Chesapeake Bay, Delaware, and Hudson stocks, Draft Addendum IV proposes it be managed by the State of North Carolina using stock-specific biological reference points. These stock-specific reference points, which have been approved by the Board, would result in a separate quota that is set to maintain F for the A/R stock at its target level. The Board tasked the Technical Committee with the continued development of Chesapeake Bay-specific reference points for future use.

The Draft Addendum is available at http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/StripedBassDraftAddendumIV_PublicComment.pdf and can also be found on the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) under Public Input. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on September 30, 2014 and should be forwarded to Mike Waine, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at mwaine@asmfc.org (Subject line: Draft Addendum IV). For more information, please contact Mike Waine, at mwaine@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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