



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission NEWS RELEASE

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ASMFC Begins Preparations for Joint 2016 Benchmark Stock Assessments for Atlantic Croaker and Spot

Arlington, VA – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has begun work on the joint benchmark stock assessments for Atlantic croaker and spot. The spot assessment will be the first coastwide assessment for these species, while the Atlantic croaker assessment will build upon the last benchmark assessment conducted in 2010. The assessments will evaluate the health of Atlantic croaker and spot populations and inform future management of the species. The Commission's stock assessment process and meetings are open to the public (with the exception of discussion of confidential data).



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The Commission welcomes the submission of data sets that will improve the accuracy of the assessments. These include, but are not limited to data on growth, maturation, migration, genetics, tagging, recruitment, natural mortality, abundance/biomass, and fishery removals. An essential need is data to inform the stock assessments of discards and bycatch in other directed fisheries (e.g., the South Atlantic shrimp trawl fishery). For data sets to be considered at the Data Workshop, the data must be sent in the required format, with accompanying methods description, to the Commission by **August 1, 2015**. All available data will be reviewed and vetted by the Atlantic Croaker and Spot Stock Assessment Subcommittee for possible use in the assessments. For those interested in submitting data, please contact Jeff Kipp (jkipp@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740), Stock Assessment Scientist, for details.

The Data Workshop will take place **September 21-25, 2015** with the location to be determined. The assessment workshop and peer review will be conducted in 2016. For more information on the Atlantic croaker and spot stock assessment process, please contact Megan Ware, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mware@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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