



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ASMFC American Lobster Board Approves Habitat Addendum and Initiates Development of Management Plan for Cancer Crabs

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s American Lobster Management Board approved Addendum XXIII to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for American Lobster. The Addendum updates Amendment 3’s habitat section to include information on the habitat requirements and tolerances of American lobster by life stage. The Addendum focuses on habitat components that play a vital role in the reproduction, growth, and the sustainability of commercial and recreational fisheries by providing shelter, feeding, spawning and nursery grounds for lobsters to survive. While the Addendum does not implement any changes to the lobster management program, it is intended to advance our understanding of the habitat needs and requirements of American lobster and provides the most current information to inform management decisions.

The Board also approved the Public Information Document (PID) for Cancer Crabs for public comment. The PID was initiated in response to concern about increasing targeted fishing pressure for Jonah crab and rock crab (collectively referred to as cancer crabs). Both species have long been considered a bycatch in the lobster fishery, however, growing market demand has doubled landings in the past seven years. Landings of both species in 2012 was over 12 million pounds and estimated to be worth over \$9 million. Given the absence of state and federal management programs and stock assessments for cancer crabs, there is concern the current harvest may compromise the sustainability of the resource.

As the first step in the development of a FMP, the PID seeks public input on information concerning cancer crab fisheries, including the identification of major issues and options relative to the management of these species. It is anticipated that several states will be conducting public hearings on the PID; a subsequent press release will announce the details of those hearings once they become finalized.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the PID either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. The PID will be available on the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) under Public Input by August 18, 2104. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on October 3, 2014 and should be forwarded to Kate Taylor, Senior FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at ktaylor@asmfc.org (Subject line: Cancer Crabs). For more information, please contact Kate Taylor, at ktaylor@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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.