



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

ASMFC Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 31, 2017

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703.842.0740

This press release revises the release distributed August 17th with the addition of Maryland's public hearing information. All other information remains the same.

States Schedule Hearings on Atlantic Menhaden Draft Amendment 3

Arlington, VA – The Atlantic coastal states of Maine through Florida have scheduled their hearings to gather public comment on Draft Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden. The details of those hearings follow.

Maine Dept. of Marine Resources

October 5, 2017; 6 PM
Yarmouth Town Hall
200 Main Street
Yarmouth, ME
Contact: [Pat Keliher](#) at 207.624.6553

October 5, 2017; 6 PM
Bourne Community Center, Room 2
239 Main Street
Buzzards Bay, MA
Contact: [Nichola Meserve](#) at 617.626.1531

New Hampshire Fish and Game Department

October 3, 2017; 7 PM
Urban Forestry Center
45 Elwyn Road
Portsmouth, NH
Contact: [Cheri Patterson](#) at 603.868.1095

Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife

October 4, 2017; 6 PM
University of Rhode Island Bay Campus
Corless Auditorium, South Ferry Road
Narragansett, RI
Contact: [Robert Ballou](#) at 401.222.4700 ext: 4420

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

October 2, 2017; 6 PM
Thayer Public Library, Logan Auditorium
798 Washington Street
Braintree, MA
Contact: [Nichola Meserve](#) at 617.626.1531

Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

September 11, 2017; 7 PM
CT DEEP Boating Education Center
333 Ferry Road
Old Lyme, CT
Contact: [Mark Alexander](#) at 860.447.4322

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.

New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation

September 12, 2017; 6 PM

NYSDEC Division of Marine Resources
205 N. Belle Mead Road
East Setauket, NY
Contact: [Jim Gilmore](#) at 631.444.0430

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

September 13, 2017; 6 PM

Manahawkin (Stafford Township) Courtroom
260 East Bay Avenue
Manahawkin, NJ
Contact: [Russ Allen](#) at 609.748.2020

Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife

September 14, 2017; 6 PM

DNREC Auditorium
89 Kings Highway
Dover, DE
Contact: [John Clark](#) at 302.739.9914

Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources

September 18, 2017; 6 PM

Anne Arundel Community College
Cade Center for the Fine Arts – Room 219
101 College Parkway
Arnold, MD
Contact: [Lynn Fegley](#) at 410.260.8285

Potomac River Fisheries Commission

September 19, 2017; 6 PM

Carpenter Building
222 Taylor Street
Colonial Beach, VA
Contact: [Martin Gary](#) at 804.456.6935

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

September 20, 2017; 6 PM

Northumberland High School
201 Academic Lane
Heathsville, VA
Contact: [Rob O'Reilly](#) at 757.247.2247

September 21, 2017; 6 PM

2600 Washington Avenue, 4th Floor
Newport News, VA
Contact: [Rob O'Reilly](#) at 757.247.2247

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

September 27, 2017; 6 PM

Central District Office
5285 US Highway 70 West
Morehead City, NC
Contact: [Michelle Duval](#) at 252.808.8013

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

September 26, 2017; 6 PM

Town of Melbourne Beach Community Center
507 Ocean Avenue
Melbourne Beach, FL
Contact: [Jim Estes](#) at 850.617.9622

Draft Amendment 3 seeks to manage the menhaden resource in a way that balances menhaden's ecological role as a prey species with the needs of all user groups. To this end, the Draft Amendment considers the use of ecosystem reference points (ERPs) to manage the resource and changes to the allocation method. In addition, it presents a suite of management options for quota transfers, quota rollovers, incidental catch, the episodic events set aside program, and the Chesapeake Bay reduction fishery cap.

The 2015 Benchmark Stock Assessment Report identified the development of ERPs as a high priority for Atlantic menhaden management. Menhaden serve an important role in the marine ecosystem as prey for a variety of species including larger fish (e.g. weakfish, striped bass), birds (e.g. bald eagles, osprey), and marine mammals (e.g. humpback whales, bottlenose dolphins). As a result, changes in the abundance of menhaden may impact the abundance and diversity of predator populations, particularly if the availability of other prey is limited. ERPs provide a method to assess the status of menhaden within the broad ecosystem context. Draft Amendment 3 provides a variety of reference point options, including the continued development of menhaden-specific ERPs as well as the application of precautionary guidelines for forage fish species.

Draft Amendment 3 also considers changes to the allocation method given concerns that the current approach may not strike an appropriate balance between gear types and jurisdictions. Specifically, under the current allocation method, increases in the total allowable catch (TAC) result in limited benefits to small-scale fisheries, and to several states. Furthermore, the current method may not provide a balance between the present needs of the fishery and future growth opportunities. Draft Amendment 3 considers a range of allocation alternatives, including a dispositional quota (bait vs. reduction), fleet-capacity quota (quota divided by gear type), jurisdictional quota, including a fixed minimum quota for each state, and an allocation method based on the TAC. In addition, the document considers five allocation timeframes including 2009-2011, 2012-2016, 1985-2016, 1985-1995, and a weighted approach which considers both historic and recent landings.

The Draft Amendment is available at http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/AtlanticMenhadenDraftAmendment3_PublicComment.pdf or on the Commission website, www.asmfc.org, under Public Input. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Amendment either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM (EST) on October 20, 2017** and should be forwarded to Megan Ware, FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Draft Amd. 3). If your organization is planning to release an action alert in response to Draft Amendment 3, please contact Megan Ware at 703.842.0740, so she can work with you to develop a unique subject line to enable us to better organize and summarize incoming comments for Board review.

Final action on the Amendment, as well as specification of the 2018 TAC, is scheduled to occur on November 14th at the BWI Airport Marriott, 1743 West Nursery Road, Linthicum, MD. For more information, please contact Megan Ware, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mware@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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