



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission NEWS RELEASE

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 2, 2019

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This press release revises the November 22nd release with the addition of a public hearing webinar on December 16.

States Schedule Public Hearings on Atlantic Croaker and Spot Draft Addenda

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board (Board) releases two documents for public comment: Draft Addendum III to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Croaker and Draft Addendum III to the Omnibus Amendment to the Interstate FMPs for Spanish Mackerel, Spot, and Spotted Seatrout. The states of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina have scheduled their hearings to gather public input on the Draft Addenda. The details of those hearings follow.

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

December 3, 2019 at 6 PM

Tawes State Office Building
C1 (Lobby) Conference Room
580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Contact: [Lynn Fegley](#) at 410.260.8285

*December 16, 2019 at 6 PM**

Wor-Wic Community College
32000 Campus Drive, Hazel Center Room 302
Salisbury, MD 21804
Contacts: [Lynn Fegley](#) at 410.260.8285 and
[John Clark](#) at 302.739.9914

** Held jointly with the Delaware
Division of Fish and Wildlife*

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

January 7, 2020 at 6:30 PM

380 Fenwick Road
Ft. Monroe, VA 23651
Contact: [Adam Kenyon](#) and [Somers Smott](#)
at 757.247.2200

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

December 5, 2019 at 6 PM

N.C. Department of Environmental Quality
Southern Regional Office
127 Cardinal Drive Extension
Wilmington, NC 28405
Contact: [Chris Batsavage](#) at 252.808.8009

NEW: ASMFC Public Hearing Webinar

December 16, 2019 at 6 PM

Webinar link:

[https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/
3538748890460954125](https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/3538748890460954125)

Conference Call #: 1-888-585-9008 (enter Conference
Room: 275-479-282 when prompted)

Contact: [Mike Schmidtke](#) at 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 diadromous species.

The Board initiated the development of the Draft Addenda for Atlantic croaker and spot to incorporate updates on the annual traffic light approach (TLA) and propose changes to the management program. In the absence of an approved stock assessment, which is the case for both species, the TLA is conducted each year to evaluate fishery trends and develop management actions (e.g. bag limits, size restrictions, time and area closures, and gear restrictions) when harvest and abundance thresholds are exceeded. The TLA assigns a color (red, yellow, or green) to categorize relative levels of indicators on the condition of the fish population or fishery. For example, as harvest or abundance increases relative to its long-term average, the proportion of green in a given year will increase and as harvest or abundance decreases, the amount of red in that year will increase. The Board annually evaluates the proportion of red against threshold levels to determine if management action is required. In recent years, fisheries for both Atlantic croaker and spot have experienced declines in harvest, but not declines in abundance as indicated by fishery-independent surveys used in the TLA. Therefore, management action has not been triggered. The lack of triggering management action with these harvest declines has raised concerns, leading to re-evaluation of TLA methods and the proposal of changes to management.

Both Draft Addenda present updates to resolve issues with the TLA analyses in order to better reflect stock characteristics, based on recommendations from the Atlantic Croaker Technical Committee and Spot Plan Review Team. Each Draft Addendum also presents options for four issues that address the TLA management triggering mechanism, triggered management responses for the recreational and commercial fisheries, and evaluation of the population's response to triggered management actions.

The Draft Addenda are available at

http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/AtlCroakerDraftAddIII_PublicComment_Oct2019.pdf and http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/SpotDraftAddIII_PublicComment_Oct2019.pdf or via the Commission's website at <http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>. Fishermen and other stakeholders are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addenda either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. Public comment will be accepted until **5 PM (EST) on January 10, 2020** and should be sent to Dr. Michael Schmidtke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Croaker and Spot Draft Addenda III).

The Board will meet at the Commission's Winter Meeting in February to review public comment and consider final approval of the Addenda.

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