



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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ASMFC South Atlantic Board Approves Atlantic Croaker and Spot Addenda

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board approved Addendum III to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Croaker and Addendum III to the Omnibus Amendment to the Interstate FMPs for Spanish Mackerel, Spot, and Spotted Seatrout. These Addenda adjust management of Atlantic croaker and spot through their respective Traffic Light Approaches (TLA).

Through the annual analysis of the TLA, which assigns a color (red, yellow, or green) to characterize relative levels of indicators that reflect the condition of the fish population (abundance characteristic) or fishery (harvest characteristic). If the amount of red, indicating low abundance or low harvest, in both characteristics exceeds threshold levels (30% and 60%) for too many years, management action is triggered. In 2018, the Atlantic Croaker Technical Committee and Spot Plan Review Team recommended updates to their respective TLAs that would incorporate additional fishery-independent indices, age information, use of regional characteristics, and changes to the management-triggering mechanism.

These Addenda change the management-triggering mechanisms to enact coastwide management if the amounts of red for both the harvest and abundance characteristics within a region (Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic) exceed threshold levels for 3 of the 4 most recent years for Atlantic croaker and 2 of the 3 most recent years for spot. The Addenda also define commercial and recreational management responses to triggers at each threshold level (see table below). Finally, the Addenda define the processes for evaluating the fisheries while triggered measures are in place and determining when triggered measures may be removed.

Management Triggers & Responses for Atlantic Croaker & Spot

| Species | Recreational | | Commercial | |
|-------------------------|--|---|--|--|
| | 30% Threshold | 60% Threshold | 30% Threshold | 60% Threshold |
| Atlantic Croaker | Bag Limit: up to 50 fish for non- <i>de minimis</i> states | Bag Limit: up to 40 fish for all states | Measures to achieve 1% harvest reduction from previous 10-year average for non- <i>de minimis</i> states with no regulations | Measures to achieve 5% harvest reduction from previous 10-year average for all states |
| Spot | Bag Limit: up to 50 fish for non- <i>de minimis</i> states | Bag Limit: up to 40 fish for all states | Measures to achieve 1% harvest reduction from previous 10-year average for non- <i>de minimis</i> states with no regulations | Measures to achieve 10% harvest reduction from previous 10-year average for all states |

Note: Regulations will not go into effect unless management is triggered by the TLA Analysis.

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.

Both Addenda were approved for immediate implementation by the states of New Jersey through Florida. The next TLA analyses will be presented to the Board at the Commission's 2020 Summer Meeting.

The Addenda will be available on the Commission's website, www.asmfc.org (on the Atlantic Croaker and Spot webpages) by mid-February. For more information, please contact Dr. Mike Schmidtke, FMP Coordinator, at mschmidtke@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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