



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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Tautog Regional Assessments Update Show Improvements in Stock Status

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Tautog Management Board reviewed the results of 2021 Regional Stock Assessments Update, which found improvements in most regions. Stocks within the Long Island Sound (LIS) and Delaware/ Maryland/Virginia (DelMarVa) regions are not overfished, with improved stock status for both regions from the last assessment in 2017. For LIS, New Jersey/New York Bight (NJ-NYB), and DelMarVa, fishing mortality also decreased with the stock not experiencing overfishing in any regions; also an improvement from the previous assessment. In the Massachusetts and Rhode Island (MARI) region, stock status remains unchanged with the stock not overfished nor experiencing overfishing.

Each regional assessment used information through 2020, including calibrated recreational data from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP). Over 90% of the total harvest of tautog across all regions comes from the recreational fishery. In addition to regional indices of abundance from fishery-independent surveys, a catch per unit effort index was developed using MRIP data for each region because tautog are not easily sampled by standard fishery-independent surveys. The new MRIP estimates resulted in higher estimates of spawning stock biomass (SSB) and recruitment in all regions, but had less of an impact on fishing mortality.

Tautog Stock Status and Reference Points by Region

Stock Region	Spawning Stock Biomass (in millions of pounds)			Fishing Mortality			Stock Status
	Target	Threshold	2020 Estimate	Target	Threshold	3-year Average	
MARI	10.09	7.57	14.90	0.28	0.49	0.23	Not overfished; overfishing not occurring
LIS	14.83	11.12	14.70	0.26	0.38	0.30	Not overfished; overfishing not occurring
NJ-NYB	14.45	10.78	10.54	0.19	0.30	0.26	Overfished; overfishing not occurring
DelMarVa	9.90	7.40	9.66	0.17	0.27	0.06	Not overfished; overfishing not occurring

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.

The regional assessments for MARI and LIS indicated strong year classes in recent years have contributed to increasing trends in SSB. In the DelMarVa region, landings and fishing mortality have declined

significantly since 2012, resulting in an increase in SSB over the time period. While the NJ-NYB region remains overfished, the SSB has been trending upward since the last assessment update.

Since no regions are experiencing overfishing, the Board choose to not make any management changes at this time. A more detailed overview of the tautog regional stock assessment update is available on the Commission website at

http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/61705d532021TautogAssessmentOverview_Oct2021.pdf. It was developed to aid media and interested stakeholders in better understanding the results. The assessment update will be available on the Commission website on the tautog webpage the week of October 25th.

For more information on the stock assessments, please contact Katie Drew, Stock Assessment Team Lead, at kdrew@asmfc.org; and for more information on tautog management, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior FMP Coordinator, at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org.

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