



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 14, 2021

PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
703.842.0740

ASMFC American Lobster Board Releases American Lobster Draft Addendum XXIX/Jonah Crab Draft Addendum IV for Public Comment

Public Hearings and Webinars Scheduled for January 2022

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s American Lobster Management Board has approved for public comment Draft Addendum XXIX to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for American Lobster and Draft Addendum IV to the Jonah Crab FMP. The Draft Addenda were initiated in August 2020 to consider implementing electronic tracking requirements for federally-permitted vessels in the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries, with the objective of collecting high resolution spatial and temporal effort data.

The collection of enhanced spatial and temporal data via electronic tracking devices in the offshore fishery would support managers in addressing a number of challenges facing the fishery. Electronic tracking data would greatly improve the stock assessment’s ability to estimate exploitation and abundance for American lobster, as the trackers would allow size composition data to be linked to harvest at a finer spatial resolution than what is currently possible. Additionally, the data could improve the models used to assess the location of vertical lines in the fishery and their associated risk to endangered North Atlantic right whales, which could impact federal risk reduction requirements for the fishery. Characterizing the footprint of the U.S. lobster fishery will also be critical to ocean planning efforts to minimize spatial conflicts with other ocean uses such as aquaculture, marine protected areas, and offshore energy development, as well as provide fishery managers tools to help maintain industry fishing grounds. Last, the efficiency of law enforcement efforts could be significantly improved with data to help enforcement officials locate widely dispersed gear in the offshore fishery.

The Commission and its member states from Maine to Virginia will be conducting a series of hearings to gather public input on the Draft Addenda. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most hearings will be conducted via webinar; some hearings will be state-specific and others regionally-focused. Public hearing information, webinar links, and call-in information are below. Please note that in order to

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.

1050 N. Highland Street • Suite 200A-N • Arlington, VA 22201
703.842.0740 (phone) 703.842.0741 (fax) www.asmfc.org

comment during the hearings you will need to use your computer or download the GoToWebinar app for your phone. Those joining by phone only will be limited to listening to the presentation and will not be able to provide input. Additional details on participating in the webinar can be found later in this release; this information is particularly important for those that have not used the GoToWebinar platform before.

Date	State or Regional Hearing	Contact(s)
Wednesday, January 12, 2022 6:30 - 8 PM	Connecticut and New York	Colleen Bouffard (CT), 860.876.6881 Maureen Davidson (NY), 631.444.0483
Thursday, January 13, 2022 6:30 - 8 PM	New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia	Joseph Cimino (NJ), 609.748.2020 John Clark (DE), 302.739.9914 Michael Luisi (MD), 443.758.6547 Patrick Geer (VA), 757.247.2236
Tuesday, January 18, 2022 6 - 8 PM	Maine Department of Marine Resources	Megan Ware (ME), 207.446.0932
Wednesday, January 19, 2022 6 - 8 PM	Maine Department of Marine Resources	Megan Ware (ME), 207.446.0932
Wednesday, January 19, 2022 6:30 - 8 PM	New Hampshire Department of Fish and Game <i>Note: This hearing will be held in a hybrid format. To virtually attend this hearing, please use this webinar registration link. To listen in only, dial 1.415.655.0052 and enter 879-685-496.</i> <i>You can also attend in person at the address below:</i> Urban Forestry Center 45 Elwyn Road Portsmouth, NH 03801	Cheri Patterson (NH), 603.868.1095
Thursday, January 20, 2022 6:30 - 8 PM	Massachusetts and Rhode Island	Nichola Meserve (MA), 617.626.1531 Jason McNamee (RI), 401.222.4700

The Draft Addenda include two options for proposed management programs. The first is status quo or no changes to the current program, and the second is to implement electronic tracking requirements for federally-permitted American lobster and Jonah crab vessels with commercial trap gear area permits for Lobster Conservation Management Areas 1 through 5 and Outer Cape Cod. Under this option, the specified permit holders would be required to install an approved electronic vessel tracking device to their vessel prior to beginning a fishing trip to collect and transmit spatial data. The devices

would collect vessel locations every minute, which would allow for the distinction between transiting and fishing activity, as well as the estimation of traps per trawl. The Draft Addenda also describe administrative processes at the Commission, state, and federal levels for successful implementation of the management program to ensure the data collected meet the needs of state and federal partners.

Webinar Instructions

To register for a public hearing webinar please click [HERE](#) and select the hearing(s) you plan to attend from the dropdown menu. Hearings will be held via GoToWebinar, and you can join the webinar from your computer, tablet or smartphone. If you are new to GoToWebinar, you can download the software ([click here](#)) or via the App store under GoToWebinar. We recommend you register for the hearing well in advance of the hearing since GoToWebinar will provide you with a link to test your device's compatibility with the webinar. If you find your device is not compatible, please contact the Commission at info@asmfc.org (subject line: GoToWebinar help) and we will try to get you connected. We also strongly encourage participants to **use the computer voice over internet (VoIP)** so you can ask questions and provide input at the hearing. Those joining by phone only, will be limited to listening to the presentation but will not be able to provide input during the hearing. In those cases, you can send your comments to staff via email, U.S. mail, or fax at any time during the public comment period. To attend the webinar in listen only mode, dial 1-877-309-2071 and enter access code 350-416-497.

The Commission will also post a recording of the hearing presentation on the Commission's YouTube page so that stakeholders may watch the presentation and submit comment at any time during the comment process. This recording will be available in early January; a subsequent press release will announce the availability of the recording.

The Draft Addenda are available at

http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/LobsterDraftAdd_XXIX_JonahCrabDraftAdd_IV_PublicComment_Dec2021.pdf or via the Commission's website at <http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>.

Members of the commercial fishing industry and other stakeholders are encouraged to provide input either by participating in public hearings, webinars, or providing written comment. Public comment will be accepted until **5 PM (EST) on January 31, 2022** and should be sent to Caitlin Starks, FMP Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201; 703.842.0741 (fax) or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Lobster Draft Addendum XXIX). For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

###