Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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Atlantic Striped Bass Board Approves Draft Amendment 7 for Public Comment: Hearings to be Conducted Throughout March

Arlington, VA – TheCommission’s Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board approved for public comment Draft Amendment 7 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Striped Bass. The Draft Amendment proposes options to address the following issues: management triggers, recreational release mortality, stock rebuilding plan, and conservation equivalency. These issues were identified during the public scoping process for Amendment 7 as critically important to help rebuild the stock and update the management program.

The Draft Amendment’s proposed options consider changes to the management triggers, which determine when the Board is required to make management adjustments, and whether to adopt new restrictions or requirements for the use of conservation equivalency, which provides the states the flexibility to tailor the management measures. For stock rebuilding, the proposed options consider the impact of low recruitment and how the Board could respond to the 2022 stock assessment if action is needed to achieve stock rebuilding by 2029. Since release mortality in the recreational fishery is a large component of annual fishing mortality, the Draft Amendment considers options to reduce the number of striped bass released alive and options to increase the chance of survival after a striped bass is released.

The last time a new plan amendment to the Atlantic Striped Bass FMP was adopted was in 2003 (Amendment 6). Since then, the status and understanding of the striped bass stock and fishery has changed considerably, and the results of the 2018 Benchmark Stock Assessment in particular led the Board to discuss a number of prominent issues facing striped bass management. Consequently, the Board initiated the development of Amendment 7 in August 2020 to update the management program to better align with current fishery needs and priorities. The Board intends for this amendment to build upon the Addendum VI to Amendment 6 action to end overfishing and initiate rebuilding in response to the overfished status of the stock.

The Draft Amendment will be available on or before February 4th on the Commission’s website at http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/public-input. The public comment period will begin once the Draft
Amendment 7 has been posted and will extend until April 15. All those interested in the management of Atlantic striped bass are encouraged to provide input either by participating in public hearings, which may be conducted via webinar, or providing written comment. Public comment will be accepted until **11:59 PM (EST) on April 15** and should be sent to Emilie Franke, 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: Draft Amendment 7). A subsequent press release will provide the details of the scheduled hearings once those are finalized. For more information, please contact Emilie Franke at efranke@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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