



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission NEWS RELEASE

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 20, 2024

PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
703.842.0749

ASMFC Schedules Horseshoe Crab Management Objectives Workshop for July 15-16 in Lewes, Delaware

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Horseshoe Crab Management Board is convening a stakeholder workshop aimed at generating recommendations for Board consideration regarding horseshoe crab management in the Delaware Bay region. The workshop responds to public concern and differing positions related to use of the [Adaptive Resource Management \(ARM\) Framework](#), which describes acceptable harvest levels for the Delaware Bay bait fishery based on the abundance of horseshoe crabs and shorebirds. The participants represent a broad range of perspectives reflecting various stakeholder interests, including horseshoe crab and shorebird/rufa red knot biologists; environmental organizations; commercial harvesters and dealers; biomedical industry representatives; and resource managers.

Following a revision to the ARM Framework in [2021](#) that incorporated new data and modeling approaches, the ARM-calculated harvest level included limited female harvest in the Delaware Bay region for the first time since its implementation in 2012. While the ARM Framework output has provided for limited female harvest since 2023, the Board has not implemented female harvest to date. Nonetheless, this possibility drew extensive public concern focused in large part on the potential for female horseshoe crab harvest to impact the threatened shorebird rufa red knot. While environmental groups continue to advocate for zero female horseshoe crab harvest from the Delaware Bay population, commercial industry participants have indicated they would value the opportunity to harvest limited number female horseshoe crabs.

Workshop Participants

Resource Managers

Joe Cimino (NJ DEP)
John Clark (DE DNREC)
Mike Luisi (MD DNR)
Shanna Madsen (VMRC)

Participant Affiliations

DE DNREC
DE Commercial Bait Harvest
MD Commercial Bait Harvest
NJ Dealer for Biomedical Use
American Littoral Society
Delaware Nature Society
The National Audubon Society
The Wetlands Institute
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Lonza
Charles River Laboratories Microbial Solutions

Facilitator

Dr. Kristina Weaver (Institute for Engagement and Negotiation, University of Virginia)

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 workshop will be facilitated by Dr. Kristina Weaver, who recently moderated a Virginia Institute of Marine Science workshop to develop a plan for the study of Atlantic menhaden in Chesapeake Bay. Dr. Weaver brings expertise in facilitation and mediation to empower communities to create shared solutions for complex social and environmental problems.

The public is welcome to attend the workshop. Since the workshop will be a working meeting, there may be a limited opportunity for the public to provide comments at the end of the meeting. The workshop will be conducted from July 15-16 at the Delaware Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Control Lewes Field Office, 901 Pilottown Road, Lewes, Delaware 19958; 302.855.7290.

It is important to note that no management decisions are being formulated or acted upon at the workshop. The meeting is intended to initiate discussions on ecosystem and management objectives, identify common ground among divergent stakeholder views, and develop options for Board discussion and consideration. For more information or if you plan to attend the workshop, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org, or James Boyle, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at jboyle@asmfc.org.

###