



# *Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*

## NEWS RELEASE

---

*Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations of all Atlantic coast fish species, or successful restoration  
well in progress by the year 2015*

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
January 30, 2007

PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger  
(202) 289-6400

### ***ASMFC Tautog Board Approves Addendum IV Addendum Establishes Stock Rebuilding Program***

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s Tautog Management Board approved Addendum IV to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Tautog. The Addendum initiates a stock rebuilding program for tautog through the establishment of coastwide target and threshold levels for spawning stock biomass (SSB), and a new fishing mortality target. Under the new program, states will be required to reduce fishing mortality by 28%. The recreational sector, which accounts for 90% of tautog harvest, can expect the implementation of more restrictive management measures by January 1, 2008. These measures may include decreased bag limits and seasonal closures.

This action was taken in response to the findings of the 2005 peer-reviewed stock assessment, as well as those of the recently updated virtual population analysis (VPA). The assessment indicates that the tautog resource remains at low biomass levels. Since the mid-1980s, tautog has undergone a substantial decrease in total and spawning stock biomass. Both indicators are currently at levels about one-third their early time series average. Based on the current fishing mortality target ( $F = 0.30$ ) and the recent fishing mortality estimates for the last two years, overfishing is not occurring.

To allow fisheries managers to assess the status of the stock, the Addendum establishes for the first time a SSB target of 26,800 metric tons and a SSB threshold of 20,100 metric tons. Based on these new reference points, the tautog resource, with an estimated SSB of 10,600 metric tons, is considered overfished. To initiate rebuilding, the Addendum establishes a new fishing mortality target of 0.20, compared to the current fishing mortality rate of 0.28. Under this scenario, states will be required to reduce fishing mortality in their recreational sectors by 28.6%. States will have until January 1, 2008 to fully implement the Addendum. The Board is scheduled to meet in May to review and approve state proposals for their recreational fisheries. A rebuilt stock would provide important benefits to recreational, commercial, and for-hire fisheries.

The Board also received a report from the Commission’s Law Enforcement Committee regarding the illegal live fish fishery that has been perceived by some as increasing in magnitude throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. The Board expressed its concern about this issue and committed to closely monitor enforcement efforts on the tautog fishery.

Copies of the Addendum will be available by early February and can be obtained by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400 or via the Commission’s website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News. For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at [cvonderweidt@asmfc.org](mailto:cvonderweidt@asmfc.org) or (202) 289-6400.

PR07-02

---

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.

1444 Eye Street, N.W. -- Sixth Floor -- Washington, D.C. 20005  
(202) 289-6400 (phone) (202) 289-6051 (fax) [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org)