



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
May 11, 2005

PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
(202) 289-6400

ASMFC Weakfish Board Initiates Development of Addendum to Address Stock Declines

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s Weakfish Management Board authorized development of an addendum to Amendment 4 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Weakfish to address stock declines. The action is taken in response to the latest stock assessment, which indicates that total mortality has risen substantially since 1995, and biomass has sharply declined from 2000 to 2003. Weakfish biomass has fallen below Amendment 4’s biological reference points, triggering the requirement of state action to rebuild biomass to 30 percent of an unfished stock in six years or less.

“Amendment 4 requires the states to reduce weakfish mortality once the biological reference points are triggered. In initiating development of an addendum, the Board has taken an important first step in responding to decreased landings and biomass of weakfish,” stated Board Chair Dr. Louis Daniel of North Carolina.

The Board has tasked the Technical Committee with developing a range of management options to reduce fishing mortality, including the anticipated rebuilding effects of those options. The draft addendum will also propose revisions to Amendment 4’s biological sampling requirements in order to meet the data needs of the annual stock assessment. These data include information on age, length, and weight of weakfish landed commercially and recreationally. The Board will be reviewing the draft addendum in August.

For more information, please contact Braddock Spear, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or <bspear@asmfc.org>.

###

PR05-07

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