



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
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ASMFC Withdraws New Jersey Tautog Noncompliance Finding

Washington, DC – ASMFC Chair George D. Lapointe has notified the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior that the Commission has withdrawn its noncompliance finding for the State of New Jersey with regards to its tautog management program. New Jersey notified the Commission on March 25, 2008 that it has implemented management measures that achieve a 25.6% reduction in exploitation as required by Addenda IV and V of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Tautog. The measures, which include recreational bag limits, and season closures for both the recreational and commercial fisheries, are consistent with those previously reviewed and approved by the Commission's Tautog Technical Committee and Management Board.

“We are delighted that New Jersey, a major participant in the tautog fishery, has committed to joining our states in taking the necessary steps to rebuild this valuable species,” states ASMFC Chair George D. Lapointe. “With stock biomass at a third of its historical average, it is critical that all the states and stakeholders dependent on this fishery share in the burden of restoring this important resource.”

On February 7, 2008, pursuant to the provisions of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act of 1993, the Commission notified the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior that the State of New Jersey was out of compliance with the provisions of the Addenda IV and V to the Tautog Plan. Specifically, New Jersey had not implemented Addenda IV and V's mandatory harvest reductions, which require the state to implement a management program that will achieve a 25.6 percent reduction in exploitation by January 1, 2008. The reduction is necessary to initiate rebuilding of the overfished tautog stock and to maintain effective cooperative management of the resource.

On March 11, 2008, the Secretary of Commerce concurred with the Commission's determination of non-compliance and notified the state that the federal government would impose a moratorium on fishing for, possession of, and landing of tautog in New Jersey state waters on April 1, 2008. With submission of the Commission's March 26th letter to the Secretary regarding New Jersey's compliance, the moratorium will not be imposed.

For more information, please contact Robert Beal, Director, Interstate Fisheries Management Program, at (202) 289-6400.

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.