



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
March 7, 2012

PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
703.842.0740

Error Found in 2011 Tautog Stock Assessment Update Leads to Decrease in Required Reductions *Board to Discuss Next Steps Via Conference Call*

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Tautog Stock Assessment Subcommittee has identified and corrected errors in the 2011 stock assessment update. Based on the revised update, a coastwide reduction of 37% in exploitation is needed to meet the Addendum VI fishing mortality target (F_{target}) of 0.15. Originally, the assessment indicated a 53% reduction was needed to achieve the F_{target} .

The revised assessment results show the stock continues to be overfished with overfishing occurring. The spawning stock biomass (SSB) has remained at low levels for the last decade, with 2009 SSB estimated at 10,930 metric tons — 41% of the target SSB (26,800 metric tons). Current coastwide fishing mortality (F) is estimated at 0.25, well above the Addendum VI target of $F=0.15$. The current F rate is calculated using a two-year average and is consistent with method used to determine original harvest reductions. Based on the revised results, SSB is not projected to reach the SSB threshold (20,100 metric tons) by 2025 under $F = 0.15$.

The Board approved Addendum VI in 2011 in response to the poor stock condition. In order to end overfishing and initiate stock rebuilding, Addendum VI lowers the F_{target} to 0.15 and requires states to implement measures to achieve this target by January 1, 2012. The Technical Committee recommended implementing an F target of 0.15 or lower to stop overfishing and improve chances of rebuilding. The species’ slow growth rate, late age of maturity, and spawning site fidelity makes it particularly susceptible to overfishing and hinders its ability to rebuild.

Given the corrected assessment update results, the Tautog Management Board will meet via conference call sometime over the next few weeks to review the revised assessment results and determine the reductions needed by each state to achieve the Addendum VI. All involved states have submitted and received approval for proposals to achieve the original reductions. It is likely that some state proposals will need to be modified given the new information. The details of the Board conference call will be released once they become available. For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cvonderweidt@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

###

PR12-14

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.

1050 N. Highland St. – Suite 200A-N – Arlington, V.A. 22201
703.842.0740 (phone) 703.842.0741 (fax) www.asmfc.org