



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
April 12, 2013

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703.842.0740

(Note: This press release revises the April 2 press release with the scheduling change for the RI hearing, moving the hearing date from April 29 to May 1 (time and location remain the same).

States Schedule Hearings on American Eel Draft Addendum III: RI Changes Hearing Date from April 29 to May 1

Arlington, VA – Atlantic coastal states from Maine through Georgia have scheduled their hearings to gather public comment on Draft Addendum III to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Eel. The dates, times, and locations of the scheduled meetings follow.

Maine Department of Marine Resources

April 30, 2013; 1 – 5 PM

Augusta Armory

179 Western Avenue

Augusta, Maine

Contact: Terry Stockwell at 207.624.6553

New Hampshire Fish and Game

April 15, 2013; 7 PM

Urban Forestry Center

45 Elwyn Center

Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Contact: Doug Grout at 603.868.1095

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

April 23, 2013; 6 – 8 PM

Bourne Public Library Meeting Room

19 Sandwich Road

Bourne, Massachusetts

Contact: Nichola Meserve at 617.626.1531

Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife

May 1, 2013; 6 PM

URI Narragansett Bay Campus, Corless Auditorium

South Ferry Road

Narragansett, Rhode Island

Contact: Phil Edwards at 401.789.0281

New York Dept. of Environmental Protection

April 22, 2013; 7 - 9 PM

Marine Resources Office

205 North Belle Mead Road, Suite 1

East Setauket, New York

Contact: Steve Heins at 631.444.0436

April 25, 2013; 6:30 – 8:30 PM

Port Jervis Free Library

138 Pike Street

Port Jervis, New York

Contact: Steve Heins at 631.444.0436

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

*May 2, 2013; 7 PM**

Atlantic County Library

Galloway Branch

306 Jimmie Leeds Road

Galloway, New Jersey

Contact: Russ Allen at 609.748.2020

*Hearing to immediately follow Marine

Fisheries Council meeting which starts at 4 PM.

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.

Delaware Dept. of Natural Resources & Environmental Control

April 11, 2013; 7 PM

DNREC Auditorium
89 Kings Highway
Dover, Delaware
Contact: John Clark at 302.739.9914

Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources

April 18, 2013; 6 – 8 PM

Maryland DNR Fisheries Service
Tawes State Office Building, C1 Conference
Room 580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, Maryland
Contact: Keith Whiteford at 410.643.6776

Potomac River Fisheries Commission

April 25, 2013; 6:30 PM

222 Taylor Street
Colonial Beach, Virginia
Contact: Ellen Cosby at 804.224.7148

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

April 24, 2013; 6 PM

943 Washington Square Mall
Highway 17
Washington, North Carolina
Contact: Garry Wright at 252.948.3864

South Carolina Dept. of Natural Resources

April 30, 2013, 6 – 8 PM

Santee-Cooper Auditorium
1 Riverwood Drive
Moncks Corner, South Carolina
Contact: Bill Post at 843.953.9821

Georgia Coastal Resources Division

April 29, 2013; 5:30 PM

John W. Stevens Wetlands Education Center
240 Cedar Street
Richmond Hill, Georgia
Contact: Jim Page at 912.264.7218

The Draft Addendum proposes a wide range of management options with the goal of reducing mortality and increasing the conservation of American eel stocks across all life stages. Specific management options focus on both the commercial (glass, yellow, and silver eel life stages) and recreational American eel fisheries. The document also proposes increased monitoring by the states and recommendations to improve American eel habitat.

Draft Addendum III responds to the findings of the 2012 benchmark stock assessment indicating the American eel population in U.S. waters is depleted. The stock has declined in recent decades and the prevalence of significant downward trends in multiple surveys across the coast is cause for concern. Causes of decline are likely due to a combination of historical overfishing, habitat loss, food web alterations, predation, turbine mortality, environmental changes, toxins and contaminants, and disease.

Commercial regulations vary by state. Glass eel fisheries currently occur in Maine and South Carolina. Significant yellow eel fisheries occur in New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, the Potomac River, Virginia, and North Carolina. Although commercial fishery landings and effort in recent times have declined in most regions, current levels of fishing effort may still be too high given the depleted nature of the stock. States and jurisdictions are required to annually report on commercial harvest and monitor juvenile abundance. The recreational fishery is currently regulated by a 50 fish per day creel limit and a six inch size minimum, although recreational harvest is believed to be low.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on Draft Addendum III by either attending public hearings or providing written comments. The Draft Addendum is available on the Commission website (www.asmf.org) under *Breaking News* or by contacting the Commission at 703.842.0740. The public comment deadline is 11:59 PM (EST) on May 2, 2013 and should be forwarded to Kate Taylor, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: American Eel). Final action on the Addendum is scheduled to occur in May. For more information, please contact Kate Taylor at ktaylor@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.