



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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North Carolina Schedules Public Hearing on Spanish Mackerel Draft Addendum I

Arlington, VA – The state of North Carolina has scheduled its public hearing to gather public comment on Draft Addendum I to the Omnibus Amendment to the Interstate Fishery Management Plans for Spanish Mackerel, Spot, and Spotted Seatrout. The date, time, and location of the hearing follows.

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

July 1, 2013; 6:00 PM
Central District Office
5285 Highway 70 West
Morehead City, North Carolina
Contact: Michelle Duval at 252.808.8011

The Draft Addendum proposes a pilot program that would allow states to reduce the Spanish mackerel minimum size limit for the commercial pound net fishery to 11 ½ inches for one or more of the summer months of July through September for the 2013 and 2014 fishing years only. The proposed measure is intended to reduce waste of these shorter fish, which are discarded dead in the summer months, by converting them to landed fish.

The Draft Addendum responds to reports about the increased incidence of Spanish mackerel ¼-inch to ½-inch short of the 12 inch fork length minimum size limit in pound nets during the summer months. While the fish are alive in the pound, once the net is bunted and bailing commences, they die before being released. This may be due to a combination of temperature, stress and crowding. Most pound nets are constructed using 1 ½-inch to 1 5/8-inch mesh in the pound and 4-inch to 6-inch mesh for the leads. While individual fishermen have experimented with different wall or panel mesh sizes depending on the target species, there is no consistent use of cull panels. Those who have used cull panels have noted the difficulty and lack of success in being able to release the undersized fish quickly enough to prevent dead discards during this time of year.

The proposed measure would only apply for the 2013 and 2014 fishing years only. Interested states would be required to notify the Commission of the specific month or months it intends to use the minimum size limit exemption.

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.

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Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum either by attending the joint public hearing or providing written comment. Draft Addendum I is available on the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) under *Breaking News* or by contacting the Commission at 703.842.0740. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM (EST) on July 19, 2013** and should be forwarded to Kirby Rootes-Murdy, FMP Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or krootes-murdy@asmfc.org (Subject line: Spanish Mackerel Addendum I). For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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