



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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PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
703.842.0740

ASMFC Northern Shrimp Section Approves Amendment 2 *Preliminary Assessment Results Indicate Need for Significant Harvest Reductions for 2011/2012 Fishing Season*

Portsmouth, NH – The Commission’s Northern Shrimp Section has approved Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Northern Shrimp and has recommended its full adoption by the Commission. It is anticipated the Commission’s Executive Committee will review and consider final approval of the Amendment this week to enable the Section to use the Amendment’s new management tools as it considers specifications for the 2011/2012 fishing season. These tools will provide the Section the ability to slow catch rates throughout the season and include trip limits, trap limits, and days out of the fishery.

The Amendment also modifies the fishing mortality reference points to include a threshold level, includes a more timely and comprehensive reporting system, and allows for the initiation of a limited entry program to be pursued through the adaptive management addendum process.

At the meeting, the Section was presented with the preliminary results of the northern shrimp stock assessment, which finds that the stock is overfished and overfishing is occurring. Current fishing mortality (F) is estimated at 0.68, above the F target, threshold and limit. Biomass is estimated at 6,500 mt, below the biomass threshold of 9,000 mt, and close to the biomass limit of 6,000 mt. Additionally, shrimp abundance in the western Gulf of Maine has declined steadily since 2006. The latest survey showed a much lower than normal abundance of large females and juveniles, with the remaining males and females being small for their age. These findings are based on the Collie-Sissenwine Analysis, which has been endorsed by three peer review panels as the preferred model to assess northern shrimp stock condition. The FMP specifies that if fishing mortality exceeds the limit level and biomass is less than the threshold level, the Section must act immediately to reduce fishing mortality.

Given these findings and the fact that there were significant overharvests in both the 2009/2010 (28% above harvest limit) and 2010/2011 (48% above harvest limit) fishing seasons, the Section will be considering a significantly reduced harvest limit for the 2011/2012 fishing season. The Technical Committee has recommended a harvest limit of approximately 1800 mt. The Section and Northern Shrimp Advisory Panel will be meeting on October 28th to set the specifications for the coming season. Initially, the meeting was scheduled to take place at the New Hampshire Urban Forestry Center. However, the Section has moved the location in order to give the industry and interested parties the opportunity to provide public input and attend the meeting. The meeting will now take place at Portsmouth Harbor Events & Conference Center, 100 Deer Street at 100 Portwalk Place, Portsmouth, NH 03801; 603.422.9225. For more information, please contact Michael Waive, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 703.842.0740 or mwaive@asmfc.org.

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.