



# *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  
February 8, 2012

PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger  
703.842.0740

### **ASMFC American Lobster Board Approves Area-Specific Measures to Reduce Fishing Exploitation on Southern New England Stock by 10%**

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s American Lobster Board approved Addendum XVII to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. The Addendum establishes area-specific management measures for Lobster Conservation Management Areas (2, 3, 4, 5, and 6) as the first step in initiating Southern New England (SNE) stock rebuilding. The measures are intended to reduce fishing exploitation on the SNE stock by 10% starting in July 2013 in response to the stock’s depleted condition, which has been at low levels of abundance and experiencing persistent low recruitment since 2002. The approved area-specific measures are as follows:

**LCMA 2 (waters off of Rhode Island and Massachusetts)** – In lieu of a closed season, a conservation equivalency program was approved to allow the states to implement a mandatory v-notch program for all legal-sized egg bearing females beginning June 1, 2012. The Technical Committee will review the proportion of v-notch females in the catch to determine compliance by July, 1 2014; if the measures do not meet the conservation objectives, a four month closed season from January 1 to April 30 will be implemented.

**LCMA 3 (offshore federal waters from Maine to North Carolina)** – A minimum size of 3 17/32” effective January 1, 2013.

**LCMAs 4 and 5 (South and east of Long Island, New York to North Carolina)** – A conservation equivalency program, composed of a mandatory V-notching program for all legal-sized egg bearing females and a closed season to be determined by the states pending Technical Committee approval, was approved. The closed season would include one or more months between January and April, with lobster traps removed from the water during the closed season. If the closed season extends four weeks or longer, the Board will allow a two-week grace period for removal of lobster traps and the setting of un-baited lobster traps one week prior to the season reopening. The grace period is intended to allow industry to safely remove and set a large number of traps if inclement weather occurs. Lobster landings will continue to be prohibited during the grace periods. The Technical Committee will review the proportion of v-notch females in the catch to determine compliance by July, 1 2014; if the measures do not meet the conservation objectives, a two-month closed season from April 29 to May 31 will be implemented.

---

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.

**LCMA 6 (Long Island Sound)** – A closed season was approved for LCMA 6, with lobster traps removed from the water during the closed season. The exact dates of the closed season will be chosen from a suite of options approved by the Board following in-state public comments, but the season could include the months September through December. The Board will allow a two-week grace period for removal of lobster traps and the setting of baited lobster traps one week prior to the season reopening. Lobster landings will continue to be prohibited during the grace periods.

The most restrictive rule will apply to lobstermen who have elected to fish in multiple LCMAs, meaning that lobstermen fishing in multiple areas will be held to the most restrictive management measures of the areas identified on their permits. The intention of this rule is to maintain the conservation benefits of the closed season and not increase effort in other areas. Addendum XVII measures will remain in place until replaced by Board action.

The Addendum will be available on the Commission's website ([www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org)) under Breaking News once the LCMAs have finalized their seasons. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior FMP Coordinator, at [tkerns@asmfc.org](mailto:tkerns@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

###