



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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American Lobster Board Approves Addendum VIII *Addendum Establishes New Biological Reference Points and Enhances Data Collection Requirements*

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s American Lobster Management Board approved Addendum VIII to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for American Lobster. The Addendum establishes new biological reference points to determine the stock status of the American lobster resource. It also expands the mandatory coastwide monitoring and reporting requirements of the plan to improve the ability of scientists and managers to assess and manage the lobster fishery. These actions are based on recommendations from the 2006 peer-reviewed stock assessment.

The new biological reference points replace the F_{10} egg production goals contained in Amendment 3 and include fishing mortality and abundance targets and thresholds for the three stock assessment areas – Gulf of Maine, Georges Bank and Southern New England (SNE). Unlike the F_{10} criteria, the new reference points will allow scientists to distinguish between a depleted and overfished stock. They also are designed to make the measures by which the lobster resource is being assessed and managed more transparent.

The new reporting and data collection requirements will mandate states to collect, at a minimum, catch and effort data summarized monthly by the National Marine Fisheries Service’s statistical areas and the Lobster Conservation Management Areas in an annual recall log format from each permit holder. The states will be required to collect trip-level catch and effort reports either as a census or a sample (at least 10% of the fishery will be sampled). Dealers involved with primary purchases (first point of sale) will be required to report trip-level transaction data. The states will have until January 1, 2008 to implement these measures. These actions will advance the collection of accurate and comparable landings -- the principal data needed to assess the impact of fishing on lobster populations.

In response to poor stock conditions in SNE as indicated by the new reference points, the Board has initiated the development of Draft Addendum IX. Over the next couple of months, the American Lobster Plan Development Team, working with the Commission’s American Lobster Advisory Panel and Lobster Conservation Management Teams for Areas 2 through 6, will be developing a suite of management options to rebuild the SNE stock. This document will be available for Board review and consideration in August; once approved, it will be made available for public review and comment.

Copies of Addendum VIII will be available by June 1 and can be obtained via the Commission’s website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, FMP Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or tkerns@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.