



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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ASMFC American Lobster Board Approves Draft Addendum XIX for Public Comment

Philadelphia, PA – The Commission’s American Lobster Board has approved Draft Addendum XIX to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster for public comment and review. The Draft Addendum proposes to change the transfer tax for Lobster Conservation Management Area 3 (LCMA 3 - offshore waters) to a single conservation tax of 10% for full business or partial trap sales within the area.

In approving Addendum XVIII in August 2012, the American Lobster Management Board inadvertently failed to include a proposed change to LCMA 3’s transfer tax. Since this issue will be considered in the upcoming federal rule-making process this winter, the Commission’s Plan Development Team recommended that the Board finalize its action relative to the LCMA 3 transfer tax and provide its recommendations to NOAA Fisheries during its winter 2012 public comment period on the LCMA 3 transfer tax.

Both Addendum XVIII and Draft Addendum XIX respond to the depleted condition of the Southern New England (SNE) lobster resource and the Board’s intent to scale the capacity of the SNE fishery to the size the SNE resource. Since the scope of the SNE resource encompasses all or part of six of the seven LCMAs established by Amendment 3, additional addenda will be developed to address effort reductions in the remaining LCMAs (4, 5, and 6). The Board will continue to work on addressing trap banking, controlled growth, and trap caps for LCMA 2 and 3 participants in the fishery.

The Board also initiated development of Draft Addendum XX to formalize measures outlined in an agreement between the offshore lobster fishery and sector trawl fishermen for bottom sharing in Closed Area II of Georges Bank in order to protect large concentrations of egg bearing females and to prevent gear conflicts. The agreement specifies certain times of year when lobster trap gear and sector trawl fishermen may fish in (or not fish in) in certain portions of Closed Area II. The fishing industry developed this agreement in anticipation of the final approval of the New England Fishery Management Council’s (NEFMC) Groundfish Framework 48 which contains measures to help mitigate the economic impact of the dramatic reductions in groundfish annual catch limits for the 2013 fishing year which begins May 1, 2013. If approved, groundfish sectors may request, through their operations plans, access to areas currently closed solely to reduce fishing mortality. In addition, the NEFMC explicitly

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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considered potential gear conflicts and included language in the Framework that states “when considering sector requests for access to closed areas, NMFS Regional Office should include, inter alia, consideration of the potential for gear conflicts, shifts in fishing effort out of the closed areas and impacts on protected species and lobsters.”

Addendum XIX will be available on the Commission website (www.asafc.org) under *Breaking News* or by contacting the Commission at 703.842.0740. Draft Addendum XX will be developed for Board consideration during the Commission’s Winter Meeting. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Acting ISFMP Director at tkerns@asafc.org or 703.842.0740.

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