



# *Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*

## NEWS RELEASE

*Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **ASMFC American Eel Board Approves Draft Addendum IV for Public Comment**

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s American Eel Management Board approved Draft Addendum IV to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Eel for public comment. Draft Addendum IV proposes a suite of options to address the commercial glass, yellow, and silver eel fisheries along the Atlantic coast. Management options under consideration include glass and yellow eel quotas, a catch cap for the yellow eel fishery, a moratorium on the glass eel fishery, and a seasonal closure and license cap for the silver eel fishery in the Delaware River (NY). The Draft Addendum also includes glass eel harvest allowances for aquaculture purposes and a conservation-based allocation program in which the states may earn a glass eel quota via stock enhancement programs that increase glass eel passage. The Draft Addendum intends to build upon the management measures established under Addendum III in order to reduce overall mortality and increase conservation of American eel stocks.

The Board’s actions respond to the findings of the 2012 benchmark stock assessment indicating the American eel population in U.S. waters is depleted. The stock has declined in recent decades and the prevalence of significant downward trends in multiple surveys across the coast is cause for concern. Causes of decline are likely due to a combination of factors including historical overfishing, habitat loss, food web alterations, predation, turbine mortality, environmental changes, toxins and contaminants, and disease.

Commercial regulations vary by state. Glass eel fisheries currently occur in Maine and South Carolina. Significant yellow eel fisheries occur in New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, the Potomac River, Virginia, and North Carolina. Although commercial fishery landings and effort in recent times have declined in most regions, current levels of fishing effort may still be too high given the depleted nature of the stock. The recreational fishery is managed under a 25 recreational fish per day creel limit (with an exception for party/charter boats) and 9 inch minimum size.

As part of the Board’s deliberations, it received a report on ongoing law enforcement activities to address American eel poaching. The Board commended the states and federal government in devoting significant resources to curtail the illegal harvest of glass eels. The implementation of Maine’s swipe card system, which allows for real time quota monitoring and harvester verification, has also been effective in inhibiting illegal harvest.

It is anticipated that the majority of states will be conducting public hearings on the Draft Addendum throughout the summer. A subsequent press release will announce the Draft Addendum’s availability as well as the details of the scheduled hearings. For more information, please contact Kate Taylor, Senior FMP Coordinator, at [ktaylor@asmfc.org](mailto:ktaylor@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

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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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