



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

ASMFC Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Addendum Development Continues

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board met to review and consider approval of Draft Addendum IV to Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass for public comment. The Draft Addendum will propose new fishing mortality reference points, as recommended by the 2013 benchmark stock assessment, and associated management measures to achieve the proposed target fishing mortality rate. While the Board did not approve the document for public comment, it approved substantive changes to the document and will reconsider a revised draft for public comment at the Commission’s Summer Meeting in August.

The most significant change was the addition of a three-year timeframe to reduce fishing mortality to its target with options to achieve the reduction in harvest incrementally over the three years. This extended timeframe is intended to lessen the impacts of taking the required harvest reductions in one year. As a result, the Draft Addendum will propose measures to achieve the required reduction all in one year or incrementally over three years.

The Board also received a report from the Technical Committee on the development of Chesapeake Bay specific fishing mortality reference points for inclusion in the Draft Addendum. Due to the nature of the fishery, which targets smaller and predominantly male fish, the Technical Committee could not develop Bay-specific reference points at this time. It reported the reference points approved for management use in the 2013 benchmark stock assessment represent the best available scientific advice to manage fishing mortality on the entire striped bass population. The proposed coastwide target fishing mortality rate is designed to maintain the spawning stock biomass at its target level over the long-term. The effects of the Bay’s harvest of smaller fish on the total coastwide stock are already incorporated into the coastwide population reference points due to different selectivity patterns for the Bay and coastal fishing fleets.

The Atlantic striped bass stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring under the proposed reference points. While the stock has declined, it remains at levels similar to 1995 when the stock was declared recovered. The revised Draft Addendum will continue to focus on the same management measures that are currently used to regulate the coastal and Chesapeake Bay striped bass fisheries – recreational bag and size limits, and adjustments to the commercial quotas. The Board established a subgroup to work closely with the Plan Development Team to help guide the inclusion of the new options. The revised Draft Addendum will be considered by the Board for approval for public comment in August, with public hearings conducted throughout the fall and final addendum approval slated for October at the Commission’s Annual Meeting. If approved, the states would then implement management measures in early 2015. For more information, please contact, Mike Waine, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mwaine@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740. PR14-15

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.