



# **Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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*Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

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### **ASMFC Atlantic Herring Board Initiates Draft Addendum to Improve Quota Management in Area 1A**

New Castle, NH – The Commission’s Atlantic Herring Management Board initiated an addendum to Amendment 3 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Herring to consider new approaches for managing the Area 1A (inshore Gulf of Maine) sub-annual catch limit (ACL) under low quota scenarios. This action responds to the challenges encountered in managing the reduced sub-ACL based on the 2018 benchmark stock assessment, which highlighted declining trends in recruitment and spawning stock biomass.

Currently, the Board can allocate the sub-ACL throughout the fishing season using bi-monthly, trimester, or seasonal quota periods to meet the needs of the fishery. For the 2019 fishing season, the Board implemented a bimonthly quota period approach to maximize the reduced sub-ACL when demand for bait is high. Due to the low quota, the 2019 fishery has experienced frequent closures to avoid an overage of the sub-ACL. It is anticipated the 2020 sub-ACL will be further reduced creating challenges in distributing the quota throughout the fishing season. The draft addendum will consider alternatives to allow the Board more flexibility in specifying the allocation under low quota scenarios moving forward. For 2020, the Board set the Area 1A sub-ACL with 72.8 percent available from June through September and 27.2 percent allocated from October through December. The Board may reconsider 2020 quota allocation following final action on the addendum.

Additionally, the draft addendum will consider expanding landing provisions for permit holders within the days out program. The Board utilizes days out of the fishery to slow the rate of Area 1A catch. In addition to days out of the fishery, landing restrictions, such as weekly landing limits, can be assigned to different vessel categories. The draft addendum will include options for the days out program such as expanding the small mesh bottom trawl fleet days out provision to all Category C and D permits.

The Board will consider approval of the draft addendum for public comment at the Commission’s Winter Meeting in February. For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@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 diadromous species.