



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*

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PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
(202) 289-6400

ASMFC Approves American Shad Amendment *States Water Fisheries to be Closed by January 1, 2013 unless Sustainability is Demonstrated; Promotes Catch and Release Recreational Fisheries*

Alexandria, VA – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has approved Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Shad and River Herring (American Shad Management). The Amendment establishes a coastwide commercial and recreational moratorium, with exceptions for sustainable systems. Sustainability is determined through state specific management plans, and applies to systems that demonstrate their commercial and/or recreational fishery will not diminish the potential future stock reproduction and recruitment. The Amendment allows for any state or jurisdiction to keep their waters open to a catch and release recreational fishery. States or jurisdictions without an approved sustainability management plan in place by January 1, 2013 will be closed (with the exception of catch and release recreational fisheries).

The Amendment was developed in response to the findings of the 2007 benchmark stock assessment for American shad, which indicates that American shad stocks are currently at all-time lows and do not appear to be recovering. It identified the primary causes for the continued stock declines as a combination of excessive total mortality, habitat loss and degradation, and migration and habitat access impediments. Although improvement has been seen in a few stocks, many remain severely depressed compared to historic levels.

To improve data collection, the Amendment implements additional required fisheries-independent and dependent monitoring for some states or jurisdictions. This includes monitoring of juvenile and adult American shad stocks; hatchery production; and commercial, recreational, and bycatch fisheries. Additionally, the Amendment increases coordination of monitoring activities for river systems under shared jurisdictions, as well as between freshwater and marine agencies. The Amendment also promotes collaboration between the Commission and the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils as the Councils work to develop bycatch reduction strategies for shad and river herring through Amendment 5 (Atlantic Herring) and Amendment 14 (Squid, Butterfish and Mackerel).

American shad were once considered the most important commercial food fish. Along with river herring, American shad are a valuable cultural and social resource with many community festivals occurring during the spring spawning migration. As a forage fish, American shad play an important ecological role in freshwater, estuarine, and marine environments.

The Amendment will be available by mid-February 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 Kate Taylor, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or at ktaylor@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.