



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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NH and RI Schedule Public Hearings on Winter Flounder Draft Addendum III

Arlington, VA – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission’s Winter Flounder Management Board approved Draft Addendum III to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for the Inshore Stocks of Winter Flounder for public comment. The Draft Addendum proposes an annual specification process to set commercial and recreational fisheries measures for the Gulf of Maine (GOM) and Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) fisheries, including in-season accountability measures for commercial fisheries.

New Hampshire and Rhode Island have scheduled their hearings to gather public comment on Draft Addendum III. The dates, times, and locations of the scheduled meetings follow.

New Hampshire Fish and Game

March 5, 2013; 7:00 PM

Urban Forestry Center

45 Elwyn Road

Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Contact: Doug Grout at 603.868.1095

Rhode Island Division of Marine Fisheries

March 26, 2013; 7:00 PM

University of Rhode Island Bay Campus Corless Auditorium

215 South Ferry Road

Narragansett, Rhode Island

Contact: Melissa Yuen at 703.842.0717

The Commission manages the two inshore stocks of winter flounder in the GOM and SNE/MA (0 – 3 miles from shore), while the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) manages winter flounder in offshore waters (3 – 200 miles). NEFMC annually establishes specifications for winter flounder stocks, including an annual catch limit (ACL), the allocation of the ACL by sub-component, and accountability

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.

measures (AMs). The federal sub-components of the ACL are subject to the established AMs. These specifications are forwarded to NOAA Fisheries Northeast Region for final approval.

Since the ACL must account for all winter flounder harvest, state water harvest is estimated as part of the federal specification process. The state water estimate is not an allocation (ACL or a target), but an estimate of catch based on the state water landings history and state regulations in both the commercial and recreational fisheries.

The Draft Addendum proposes an annual specification process to set commercial and recreational fisheries measures, including trip limits, seasons, size limits, and possession limits, that are based on the federally-established state water sub-component ACL. These measures would be subject to review by the Commission's Winter Flounder Technical Committee and approval by the Management Board. The Draft Addendum also proposes a harvest control measure using a trigger that will reduce commercial trip limits when a specified percentage of the state water sub-ACL is reached.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. Draft Addendum III is available on the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) under *Breaking News* or by contacting the Commission at 703.842.0740. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM (EST) on April 10, 2013** and should be forwarded to Melissa Yuen, FMP Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or myuen@asmfc.org (Subject line: Winter Flounder Draft Addendum III). For more information, please contact Melissa Yuen at myuen@asmfc.org.

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