



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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PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
703.842.0740

ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Board Approves Mandatory Commercial Tagging Program through Addendum III

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board has approved Addendum III to Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass. The Addendum establishes a mandatory commercial tagging program for all states and jurisdictions with commercial striped bass fisheries and recommends increasing penalties for illegally harvested fish. The tagging program includes requirements for timely catch reporting, increased accounting of unused tags, improved standardization of tag type, and the use of biological metrics for determining state/jurisdiction tag quantity. These measures are intended to prevent commercial striped bass quota overages and the illegal harvest of striped bass. Both undermine the sustainability of striped bass populations, as well as reduce the economic opportunities of commercial and recreational fishermen who legally participate in the fishery.

The Addendum responds to recommendations of the Interstate Watershed Task Force (IWTF). The IWTF conducted a multi-year, multi-jurisdictional investigation on illegal commercial striped bass harvest within Chesapeake Bay, resulting in over \$1.6 million dollars in fines against 19 individuals and three corporations for more than one million pounds of striped bass harvested illegally. The investigation revealed some current control measures for regulating the harvest of striped bass were ineffective or inadequately designed to maximize compliance. The investigation also found that greater accountability of wholesalers was necessary. All public comment received on the Addendum was in favor of the mandatory tagging program and, in addition, the program was supported by NOAA Fisheries and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

All states and jurisdictions, with the exception of Massachusetts and North Carolina, are required to implement Addendum III’s measures by the opening of their respective 2013 commercial fishing seasons. North Carolina was granted an extension due to the timing of its season (North Carolina’s fishery opens December 1st), while Massachusetts lacks an established commercial tagging program and needs additional time to develop its program. Both states will be required to implement their programs by January 1, 2014.

The Addendum will be available on the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at 703.842.0740 by the end of August. For more information, please contact Kate Taylor, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 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.

1050 N. Highland St. – Suite 200A-N – Arlington, V.A. 22201
703.842.0740 (phone) 703.842.0741 (fax) www.asmfc.org