



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 Approves Spanish Mackerel and Red Drum Addenda

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s South Atlantic State-Federal Fisheries Management Board approved two addenda – Addendum I to the Omnibus Amendment to the Interstate Fishery Management Plans (FMPs) for Spanish Mackerel, Spot, and Spotted Seatrout and Addendum I to Amendment 2 to the Interstate FMP for Red Drum.

Addendum I to the Omnibus Amendment establishes a pilot program that would allow states to reduce the Spanish mackerel minimum size limit for the commercial pound net fishery to 11 ½ inches during the summer months of July through September for the 2013 and 2014 fishing years only. The measure is intended to reduce waste of these shorter fish, which are discarded dead in the summer months, by converting them to landed fish that will be counted against the quota.

The Addendum responds to reports about the increased incidence of Spanish mackerel ¼ to ½ inch short of the 12 inch fork length minimum size limit in pound nets during the summer months. While the fish are alive in the pound, once the net is bunted and bailing commences, they die before being released. This may be due to a combination of temperature, stress and crowding. While individual fishermen have experimented with different wall or panel mesh sizes depending on the target species, there is no consistent use of cull panels. Those who have used cull panels have noted the difficulty and lack of success in being able to release the undersized fish quickly enough to prevent dead discards during this time of year.

The measure will only apply for the 2013 and 2014 fishing years after which the success of the program will be evaluated for consideration in years beyond 2014. Interested states would be required to notify the Commission of the specific time period it intends to use the minimum size limit exemption.

The Board also approved Addendum I to Amendment 2. The Addendum revises Amendment 2’s habitat section to include current information on red drum spawning habitat and habitat by life stage (egg, larval, juvenile, sub-adult, and adult). It also identifies and describes the distribution of key habitats and habitats of concern, including threats, habitat bottlenecks (habitat or habitat characteristics that limit the sustainability or recovery of red drum), and ecosystem considerations.

Both addenda will be available on the Commission’s website (www.asmfc.org) under *Breaking News* or by contacting the Commission at 703.842.0740. For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 703.842.0740 or via email at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org.

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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.