

ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION
AMENDMENT 5 TO THE INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS

ADDENDUM II
1998 FISHERIES



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INTRODUCTION

On May 20, 1997, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Striped Bass Management Board initiated Addendum II to the interstate management plan for striped bass. This was done because Amendment 5 (the current version of the plan) and its associated Addendum I only specified fishing regulations through 1997, and policy had to be formulated for the next fishing year. At the following meeting in July, the Management Board decided to revise the target fishing mortality rate for Amendment 5, and adopt a new assessment tool for Atlantic coast stocks in Virtual Population Analysis (VPA). Under the flexible and adaptive management approach of Amendment 5, the Management Board can make these changes to the plan through the addendum process.

Amendment 5 specified target fishing mortality rates (F) over a multi-year period, with states eventually scheduled to adopt the F at maximum sustainable yield (F_{msy}) through relaxed regulations. F_{msy} is regarded by scientists as the threshold before which overfishing occurs, and is dependent on the rate at which a species grows, matures, and spawns. After careful consideration of the scientific advice and input from the Citizens' Advisory Panel, the Management Board voted to remain at the current mortality rate for Addendum II, which is currently $F=0.31$ at the standard minimum sizes of 20" in bays and 28" in coastal areas. The Technical Committee, Advisory Panel, and Management Board decided that this lower reference point would provide a larger margin of safety for the striped bass stocks and help prevent overfishing. However, the Board directed the Technical Committee to continue studying F_{msy} for striped bass, and to determine other fishing mortality rates necessary for various "qualities" of fisheries to be outlined by the Advisory Panel in the future.

The adoption of the VPA modeling approach has been one of the original objectives of Amendment 5 since it was adopted in March, 1995. This approach, which is widely used in the assessment and management of other species, makes use of the extensive landings records and scientific survey data compiled by the states each year. Unlike past approaches to striped bass assessment, the VPA incorporates data from all the producing areas and individual stocks rather than relying solely on Chesapeake Bay juvenile abundance information. The Management Board adopted the VPA as an assessment tool with the understanding that it would be immediately subjected to formal peer review, in conjunction with the models used in the past (Spawning Stock Biomass model, etc.).

Until this peer review is complete, the Management Board has decided to maintain the status quo in state striped bass regulations. Specifically the states voted to maintain 1997 ocean fishing regulations for sport and commercial fisheries in 1998. Producer area fisheries will start their 1998 fisheries at 1997 levels, but may submit new proposals to achieve the target fishing mortality after a final stock assessment peer review is complete in January 1998. Likewise, ocean management parameters may be revised after the peer review if necessary to achieve the target $F = 0.31$. States whose regulations exceed the minimum requirements may apply immediately to come down to the management plan standards.