



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 Menhaden Board Approves Draft Addendum V for Public Comment

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s Atlantic Menhaden Management Board has approved Draft Addendum V to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden for public comment. The Draft Addendum proposes establishing a new interim fishing mortality threshold and target (based on maximum spawning potential or MSP) with the goal of increasing abundance, spawning stock biomass, and menhaden availability as a forage species.

The Draft Addendum will also initiate the scoping process (comparable to that of a Public Information Document) on the suite of management tools that could be used to implement the new fishing mortality threshold and target levels. As in a PID, it will contain preliminary discussions of biological, environmental, social, and economic information, fishery issues, and potential management options for action through an addendum.

The MSP approach, as recommended by the 2009 peer review panel, identifies the fishing mortality rate necessary to maintain a given level of stock fecundity (number of mature ova) relative to the potential maximum stock fecundity under unfished conditions. The Draft Addendum presents two options for the new interim fishing mortality threshold (status quo based on an MSP of 8% and an MSP of 15%) and four options for the interim fishing mortality target (status quo and F based on MSPs of 20, 30 and 40%). For illustration purposes, a 15% MSP would equate to a fishing mortality rate threshold required to maintain approximately 15% of virgin stock fecundity. The current MSP level is 8%.

Based on the revised 2009 Atlantic menhaden stock assessment, menhaden was not overfished but had experienced overfishing in 2008. Given the current overfishing definition, which sets the fishing mortality rate (F) target at 0.96 and the F threshold at 2.2, this is the first time overfishing has occurred since 1998. Over the time series, overfishing had occurred in 32 of the last 54 years. F in 2008 (the latest year in the assessment) is estimated at 2.28.

States will be conducting hearings on the Draft Addendum; the details of those hearings will be released when they become available. Staff will be finalizing the Draft Addendum over the next couple of weeks. A subsequent announcement will be made once it is available for public comment. The Board will meet in November at the Commission’s Annual Meeting to review public comment and consider final action on the Addendum. Having gathered scoping information on management tools to implement Addendum V, the Board will also consider moving forward on a subsequent addendum to establish associated management measures. The Board’s intent is to finalize these management measures for implementation in 2013.

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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