



# **Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

*Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **ASMFC Tautog Board Approves Draft Amendment 1 for Public Comment**

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s Tautog Management Board approved Draft Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Tautog for public comment. The Draft Amendment proposes a fundamental change in tautog management, moving away from management on a coastwide basis towards regional management. In addition, Draft Amendment 1 proposes the establishment of a commercial harvest tagging program, as well as new goals and objectives, biological reference points and fishing mortality targets, and a stock rebuilding schedule.

Draft Amendment 1 proposes delineating the stock into four regions due to differences in biology and fishery characteristics, as well as limited coastwide movement.

#### **Table 1. Four-Region Management Approach**

- 1) Massachusetts – Rhode Island**
- 2) Long Island Sound (CT and NY LIS)**
- 3) New Jersey – New York Bight**
- 4) Delaware – Maryland – Virginia**

Management options by region have been developed in response to the 2016 stock assessment update. Long Island Sound and New Jersey-New York Bight would be required to take harvest reductions due to the regional overfishing stock status, while Massachusetts-Rhode Island and Delaware-Maryland-Virginia would not have to take harvest reductions, but are proposing regional measures.

A commercial harvest tagging program is being proposed to address an illegal, unreported and undocumented fishery that has persisted for more than a decade. Reports of illegally harvested fish have been documented in cases against fishermen, fish houses, and at retail markets and restaurants. The tagging program, which would accommodate both the live and dead commercial markets, was recommended by the Commission’s Law Enforcement Committee to increase accountability in the fishery and curb illegal harvest. A tautog tag trial was conducted to investigate the impact of the tags on the resource and found no mortality or degradation to fish health.

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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.

It is anticipated the majority of states from Massachusetts through Virginia will be conducting public hearings on the Draft Amendment. The details of those hearings will be released in a subsequent press release. The Draft Amendment will be available on the Commission website, [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) (under Public Input) by May 15<sup>th</sup>. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Amendment either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM (EST) on July 14, 2017** and should be forwarded to Ashton Harp, FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at [aharp@asmfc.org](mailto:aharp@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Draft Amendment 1).

Final action on the Amendment is scheduled to occur in August. For more information, please contact Ashton Harp, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [aharp@asmfc.org](mailto:aharp@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

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