



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Virtual Public Hearings Scheduled on 2023 Atlantic Striped Bass Emergency Action

Arlington, VA – The Commission has scheduled four public hearings on the emergency action approved on May 2, 2023 by the Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board for 2023 recreational management measures. The Board implemented a 31-inch maximum size limit for striped bass recreational fisheries, effective immediately for 180 days (through October 28, 2023). This action responds to the unprecedented magnitude of 2022 recreational harvest, which is nearly double that of 2021, and new stock rebuilding projections, which estimate the probability of the spawning stock rebuilding to its biomass target by 2029 drops from 97% under the lower 2021 fishing mortality rate to less than 15% if the higher 2022 fishing mortality rate continues each year.

The Commission will conduct four virtual public hearings via webinar to inform the public about this action and identify next steps for management. A summary of these hearings will be provided to the Board at its next meeting. Additional details on participating in the webinars can be found later in this release. All hearings are open to anyone from any state. If you are planning to attend multiple hearings, staff requests that you provide comments at only one hearing to allow time for all hearing participants to provide comments.

The public hearing schedule is as follows:

Date	Time
Wednesday, May 17	5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Monday, May 22	6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, May 23	5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, May 31	6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

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 diadromous species.

As outlined in the Commission’s Interstate Fisheries Management Program Charter, a management board can take emergency action to address circumstances under which public health or the conservation of coastal fishery resources or attainment of fishery management objectives has been placed substantially at risk by unanticipated changes in the ecosystem, the stock, or the fishery. The Board implemented the emergency 31-inch maximum size limit for 2023 to reduce harvest of the strong 2015-year class. The 31-inch maximum size limit applies to all existing recreational fishery regulations where a higher (or no) maximum size applies, excluding the May Chesapeake Bay trophy fisheries which already prohibit harvest of fish less than 35 inches. All bag limits, seasons, and gear restrictions will remain the same. Jurisdictions are required to implement the required measure as soon as possible but no later than July 2, 2023. If it deems necessary, the Board may extend the emergency action for two additional periods of up to one year each at a future Board meeting.

For 2024 management, the Board initiated Addendum II to Amendment 7 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan to consider measures designed to reduce fishing mortality to the target. The Draft Addendum II process will include a public comment period and public hearings, likely later this year, regarding options for 2024 management measures.

Webinar Instructions

For all virtual hearings, please note that in order to comment during virtual webinar hearings you will need to use your computer or download the GoToWebinar app for your phone. Those joining by phone only will be limited to listening to the presentation and will not be able to provide input. To attend the webinar in listen only mode, dial 914.614.3221 and enter access code 424-938-669.

For all virtual hearings, **please click [HERE](#) and use the dropdown menu to select the hearing date you plan to attend** to register for a public hearing webinar. Hearings will be held via GoToWebinar, and you can join the webinar from your computer, tablet or smartphone. If you are new to GoToWebinar, you can download the software by ([clicking here](#)) or via the App store under GoToWebinar. We recommend you register for the hearing well in advance of the hearing since GoToWebinar will provide you with a link to test your device’s compatibility with the webinar. If you find your device is not compatible in advance of the hearing, please contact the Commission at info@asmfc.org (subject line: GoToWebinar help) and we will try to get you connected. We also strongly encourage participants to **use the computer voice over internet protocol (VoIP)** so you can ask questions and provide input at the hearing.

For more information, please contact Emilie Franke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at efranke@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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