



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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ASMFC Seeks Contractor to Facilitate Delaware Bay Horseshoe Crab Management Objectives Workshop

Proposals Due January 8, 2024

Arlington, VA – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) is issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a facilitator to conduct the Delaware Bay Horseshoe Crab Management Objectives Workshop. The contractor would design and facilitate the workshop, as well as develop a report of workshop conclusions and recommendations as input to the Commission’s Horseshoe Crab Management Board (Board).

Since 2013, the Board has used the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework to determine harvest level for the bait fishery in the Delaware Bay states of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia based on the abundance levels of horseshoe crabs and shorebirds. In 2021, a revision to the ARM Framework was completed to address feedback from the previous peer review panel, include newly available data, and transition to new modeling software. The adoption of the 2021 ARM Framework Revision resulted in extensive public concern, focused in large part on the potential for female horseshoe crab harvest under the revised ARM Framework and its impact on the rufa red knot. The red knot is a migratory shorebird listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act that depends on horseshoe crab eggs as a major food source in the Delaware Bay region during its migration. However, the various stakeholder groups in the Delaware Bay region hold diverging values and perspectives on management of the horseshoe crab resource. Commercial industry participants indicated they still value the harvest of female horseshoe crabs, though it has not occurred in the region since 2012 due to ARM model outputs. Conversely, researchers and environmental groups have advocated for zero female horseshoe crab harvest from the Delaware Bay population.

Given these conflicting stakeholder goals and values, the Board is convening a Horseshoe Crab Management Objectives Workshop, to include a small group of managers, scientists, and stakeholders to explore potential future objectives and management approaches for the Delaware Bay-origin horseshoe crab fishery. The Workshop will be held in the spring of 2024.

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.

Proposals must be submitted, as a single file, an electronic proposal by email no later than **midnight on January 8, 2024** to Toni Kerns, Fisheries Policy Director, at tkerns@asmfc.org. Please see the RFP for more details, qualifying requirements, and submission instructions. The RFP is available at <https://asmfc.org/files/RFPs/HSCWorkshopFacilitatorRFP.pdf>.

Please contact Toni Kerns, Fisheries Policy Director, at tkerns@asmfc.org for questions regarding the request for proposals.

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