



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

American Lobster Management Board Summary

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

American Lobster Management Board
February 22, 2022

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Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

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AMERICAN LOBSTER MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 22, 2022)

Meeting Summary

The American Lobster Management Board (Board) met to consider public comments, input from the American Lobster and Jonah Crab Advisory Panels (APs), and final action on Draft Addenda XXIX and IV to the American Lobster and Jonah Crab FMPs, respectively, on electronic tracking requirements in the federal American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries. In response to requests from the public for more information on the proposed management program, the Board agreed to postpone considering final action on the Draft Addenda until its next meeting, which is to be held virtually sometime prior to the ASMFC Spring Meeting.

The Draft Addenda were initiated in August 2021 to consider electronic tracking requirements for federal permit holders in the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries. The purpose of the proposed action is to address a critical need for high-resolution spatial and temporal data to characterize effort in the federal American lobster and Jonah crab fleet. Spatial data collected by tracking devices would benefit managers in contending with several challenges facing the fisheries, including Atlantic right whale risk reduction efforts, marine spatial planning discussions, stock assessment, and offshore enforcement. The Draft Addenda include two options for proposed management programs. The first is status quo or no change, and the second is to implement electronic tracking requirements for federally-permitted lobster and Jonah crab vessels with commercial trap gear area permits for Lobster Conservation and Management Areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and Outer Cape Cod. Under this option, the specified permit holders would be required to install an approved electronic vessel tracking device to their vessel prior to beginning a fishing trip to collect and transmit spatial data.

The majority of public comments, as well as advice from American lobster and Jonah crab advisors, supported the status quo option. In large part this was the result of many remaining questions about the tracking devices, costs to industry, and standard procedures that would need to be followed by harvesters and states to successfully implement requirements for electronic vessel tracking. Therefore, the Board agreed to postpone consideration of final action. Instead, the Board engaged in further discussion on questions that had been raised by the public and APs about how the program would work in practice. The Board requested that staff work with the Plan Development Team, state managers, NOAA Fisheries, and ACCSP to provide additional details to the Board on standard operating procedures. The Board is expected to meet to consider this information and Draft Addendum XXIX for final approval in late March or early April. A press release will announce the timing of that meeting.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

Motions

Move to postpone action on Lobster Draft Addendum XXIX and Jonah Crab Draft Addendum IV until the next meeting of the American Lobster Management Board, which will be held before the ASMFC Spring Meeting.

Motion made by Ms. Patterson, and seconded by Mr. Borden. Motion passes (11 in favor).