



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 American Lobster Board Approves Addendum XVIII Trap Reductions for LCMA 2 and 3

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s American Lobster Board has approved Addendum XVIII to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. The Addendum establishes a consolidation program for lobster conservation management areas (LCMAs) 2 and 3 (Southern New England and offshore waters, respectively) to address latent effort by reducing the overall number of traps allocated. It is estimated that latent effort is 40% and 30% in LCMAs 2 and 3, respectively. Implementation of the Addendum’s measures is contingent upon NOAA Fisheries’ implementation of transferability and trap reduction rules for federal waters.

LCMA 2 trap allocation will be reduced by 25% in year one and then by 5% for the following five years, ultimately reducing total traps allocated by 50%. Trap allocation reductions will be from the initial (2007) permit allocation for state-only permit holders and, for federal permit holders, from the final allocations established by NOAA Fisheries. LCMA 3 trap allocations will be reduced each year by 5% each year for five years, totaling 25%. Trap allocation will be reduced from the current (2012) permit trap allocation. LCMA 3 had previously undergone approximately a 30% reduction in traps allocated since 2003. In addition, any other allocation obtained by the permit holder subsequent to the initial allocation would also be cut for both areas.

The Addendum responds to the depleted condition of the Southern New England (SNE) lobster resource and the Board’s intent to scale the capacity of the SNE fishery to the size the SNE resource, with an initial goal of reducing qualified trap allocation by at least 25% over a five to ten year period. For trap limits to be effective in reducing harvest and rebuilding the stock, latent effort must first be addressed to prevent this effort from coming back into the fishery as the stock grows and catch rates increase. Since the scope of the SNE resource encompasses all or part of six of the seven LCMAs established by Amendment 3, additional addenda will be developed to address effort reductions in the remaining LCMAs.

The Board deferred action on three options that were presented in Draft Addendum for public comment – trap banking, controlled growth, and trap caps for participants in the fishery. The Board will continue to work with industry and NOAA Fisheries to develop a viable transferability program to address industry’s needs for flexibility. The Addendum will be available on the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at 703.842.0740 by the end of August. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Acting ISFMP Director at tkerns@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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.