



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

ASMFC Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ASMFC Atlantic Herring Section Approves Draft Amendment 3 PID for Public Comment

Alexandria, VA – The Commission's Atlantic Herring Section approved the Public Information Document (PID) for Draft Amendment 3 to the Interstate Atlantic Herring Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for public comment. Draft Amendment 3 was initiated to strengthen spawning sea herring protections in Area 1A (inshore Gulf of Maine) and address concerns raised by the commercial Atlantic herring industry. The PID presents four issues the Commission is seeking public input on to better inform the development of management measures for the Atlantic herring fishery. The issues focus on (1) spawning area boundaries and closures in Area 1A, (2) a fixed gear set-aside rollover provision, (3) declaration of fishing gear prior to the beginning of a quota period in order to provide fishery managers a more accurate estimate of effort for decisions relative to harvest control measures and (4) requirement for a vessel's fish hold to be emptied before leaving on a fishing trip in order to allow for full accounting of catch and to discourage dumping of unsold fish.

The 2012 stock assessment estimated the Atlantic herring spawning stock biomass (SSB) at 517,930 mt (1.1 billion pounds) in 2011. Atlantic herring is considered rebuilt; it is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. Commercial landings have increased since 1983 to a high of 101,859 mt (224.6 million pounds) in 2009. Annual catch has averaged 82,407 mt (181.7 million pounds) since implementation of the FMP in 1993.

The PID is the first step in the Commission's amendment process. It is intended to gather information concerning the Atlantic herring fishery and provide an opportunity for the public to identify and comment on major issues relative to the management of these species. Following the initial phase of information-gathering and public comment, the Commission will evaluate potential management alternatives and develop Draft Amendment 3 for public review. After the public comment period, the Commission will specify the management measures to be included in Amendment 3. A tentative schedule for the completion of Amendment 3 is included in PID.

Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts will be conducting public hearings on the PID. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the four issues in the PID, as well as comment on other management measures that should be considered, either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. A subsequent press release will announce the PID's availability as well as the details of the scheduled hearings. For more information, please contact, Melissa Yuen, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at myuen@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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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.