



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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ASMFC South Atlantic Board Approves Atlantic Cobia Addendum I

The Commission's South Atlantic States/Federal Fisheries Management Board approved Addendum I to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia. The Addendum modifies: (1) the allocation of the resource between the commercial and recreational sectors, (2) the methodology to calculate the commercial trigger for in-season closures; and (3) and commercial and recreational *de minimis* measures.

The Addendum changes the allocation of the resource between the recreational and commercial fisheries from 92% and 8% respectively to 96% and 4% respectively. The change was primarily based on new recreational catch estimates that resulted from changes in survey methodology by the Marine Recreational Information Program. The new catch estimates were, on average, about two times higher than previously estimated, impacting the allocation between the two sectors. In considering the new allocation percentages, the Board took into account the increase in the recreational catch and the harvest levels of the commercial fishery in recent years. The new commercial allocation allows the fishery to operate at its current level with some room for landings to increase as the stock range expands further north.

The Addendum also modifies the calculation of the commercial trigger, which determines when an in-season coastwide commercial closure occurs. The approved trigger is set up to provide states with enough time to close the fishery via their administrative processes without exceeding the quota.

Changes to *de minimis* measures, which are applied to states with relatively small commercial or recreational harvest, include adjusting the commercial allocation set aside and recreational regulations. For *de minimis* measures, the Addendum establishes a commercial *de minimis* set aside of 4% of the commercial quota with a maximum cap of 5,000 pounds to account for potential landings in *de minimis* states not tracked in-season against the quota. States that are *de minimis* for their recreational fisheries may choose to match the recreational management measures implemented by an adjacent non-*de minimis* state (or the nearest non-*de minimis* state if none are adjacent), or limit its recreational fishery to 1 fish per vessel per trip with a minimum size of 33 inches fork length (or an equivalent total length of 37 inches).

States are required to implement the new measures by January 1, 2021. For more information, please contact Savannah Lewis, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at slewis@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.