



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 6, 2021

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States Achieve Required Coastwide Reductions in Atlantic Striped Bass Total Removals *Development of Draft Amendment 7 Continues; Board Initiates Addendum to Amendment 6*

The Commission's Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board's review of the performance of the 2020 fishery yielded positive news, with the states achieving Addendum VI's goal of reducing total removals by 18% relative to 2017 levels. In fact, the states realized an estimated 28% reduction in total removals coastwide in numbers of fish from 2017 levels. Total removals include commercial harvest, commercial dead discards, recreational harvest, and recreational release mortality. Addendum VI was initiated in response to the 2018 benchmark assessment and aims to reduce total removals in order to end overfishing and reduce fishing mortality to the target level in 2020. The next stock assessment update for striped bass, scheduled to occur in 2022, will provide an update on the status of stock relative to the biological reference points.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted data collection for the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) dockside sampling program, but MRIP was able to fill those data gaps using information from 2018 and 2019. While this does increase the uncertainty around the estimates of total recreational catch, there is still high confidence in those estimates and the estimates of the realized reductions.

After considering 2020 fishery performance, the Board provided guidance on a number of topics related to the development of Draft Amendment 7 (e.g., recreational release mortality, conservation equivalency, management triggers). Amendment 7 was initiated in August 2020 to update the management program to reflect current fishery needs and priorities as the status and understanding of the resource and fishery has changed considerably since implementation of Amendment 6 in 2003. The Amendment is intended to build upon Addendum VI's action to end overfishing and initiate rebuilding. The Plan Development Team will continue to develop options for the Draft Amendment based on the guidance received from the Board.

Concurrent with the development of Draft Amendment 7, the Board initiated an addendum to Amendment 6 to consider allowing the voluntary transfer of commercial striped bass quota between

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.

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states/jurisdictions that have commercial quota. This action is in response to a request from the State of Delaware to reconsider Delaware's current commercial quota allocation.

Based on progress made on Draft Amendment 7 and Draft Addendum VII to Amendment 6, the Board's next opportunity to meet and consider possible approval of both documents for public comment will be in October during the Commission's Annual Meeting. For more information, please contact Emilie Franke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at efranke@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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