



# ***Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission***

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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*Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 6, 2021

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### **ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Board Initiates Addendum on Fishery Measures**

The Commission's Atlantic Menhaden Management Board initiated an addendum to Amendment 3 to consider changes to commercial allocations, the episodic event set aside (EESA) program, and the incidental catch and small-scale fisheries provision. This action responds to the recommendations of a Board work group charged with evaluating provisions of the current management program and providing strategies to refine those provisions.

Amendment 3 (2017) established commercial fishery allocations, allocating a baseline quota of 0.5% to each jurisdiction with the rest of the total allowable catch (TAC) allocated based on historic landings between 2009 and 2011. The work group report outlined landings have shifted in recent years, with some states landing significantly more quota (through transfers and other FMP provisions) than they are allocated due to changes in abundance of menhaden and availability of other bait fish. The Board action aims to align state quotas with recent landings and availability while maintaining access to the resource for all states, reduce dependence on quota transfers, and minimize regulatory discards.

The addendum will also propose changes to the EESA and incidental catch and small-scale fisheries provisions. Both provisions have been impacted by recent trends in landings, most notably in New England where states rely on the EESA to keep their commercial fishery open while working to secure quota transfers. The increasing abundance of menhaden in New England has also led to a rise of landings under the incidental catch and small-scale fisheries provision once commercial quotas have been met. The Board is interested in exploring options to promote accountability such as capping the total amount of landings under this category or to count these landings against the TAC. Management alternatives for the incidental catch and small-scale fisheries will also consider changes to the current eligibility of gear types under the provision. In addition to these topics, the Board indicated the management document should maintain flexibility to respond to management needs in the future.

The Board will consider the Draft Addendum at the Annual Meeting in October and provide feedback, if needed, to further develop the document. For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

PR21-17

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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 diadromous species.