

Addendum IX to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster



ASMFC Vision Statement:

Healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015.

October 2006

1.0 Background

In November 2005, the Lobster Board adopted Addendum VII to the American Lobster Interstate Fisheries Management Plan. This management plan establishes a multi-state effort control program for Lobster Conservation Management Area (LCMA) 2. The plan governs traps fished in state and federal waters to cap effort (traps fished) at recent levels and allows adjustments in traps based on future stock conditions. The plan limits participation to permit holders who have been active in the fishery in recent years, creates permit-holder specific trap limits that are unique and based on reported traps fished and landings.

2.0 Statement of the Problem

Addendum VII was to establish a transfer program that allows the transfer of trap allocations with conservation “tax”. While the transfer program is currently being developed, addendum VII did not establish a value for the conservation tax.

The purpose of including a transferable trap plan within the Area 2 LCMT Lobster Plan, in conjunction with the effort control plan in LCMA 2, is to establish a program that helps to maintain conservation objectives necessary to sustain the lobster resource by passively reducing traps in the Area 2 fishery. It also allows for economic profitability through flexibility, and supports creative options for future business planning.

3.0 Management Options

Trap tags may be transferred among LCMA 2 lobster fishers to allow an individual business to build up or down within the maximum allowable 800 trap limit, however, a passive reduction in traps will occur with each trap transfer event at the rate of 10%. For example, if 100 trap tags are transferred to a fisher, the net number of tags received by that lobster fisher will be 90 and the overall LCMA 2 trap cap will be reduced accordingly. For this program, a transfer is defined by a change in ownership of a trap tag allocation or any portion thereof. The trap cap may be adjusted downward over time through active and/or passive reduction measures until such time that the fishing mortality rate is reduced to a level below the target. Trap tag transfers may occur only within the LCMA 2 boundaries.

The Lobster Board may review annually the effectiveness of the effort control plan for Area 2 and may modify the transfer tax if it is no longer deemed necessary because the Area’s conservation goals are met, alternative management strategies are adopted, or further analyses identifies that the tax needs to be increased.

4.0 Recommendations for Actions in Federal Waters

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission believes that the measures contained in Amendment #3 and Addenda I-VIII are necessary to limit the expansion of effort into the lobster fishery, to rebuild the lobster stock to recommended levels and to address stock

declines. ASMFC recommends that the federal government promulgate all necessary regulations to implement the measures contained in Sections 3 of this document.