



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

*Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations of all Atlantic coast fish species, or successful restoration
well in progress by the year 2015*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ASMFC Finds North Carolina Out of Compliance with Addendum IV to Amendment 4 to the Interstate FMP for Weakfish *Noncompliance Finding Forwarded to the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior*

Alexandria, VA – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has found the State of North Carolina out of compliance with the mandatory management measures contained in Addendum IV to Amendment 4 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Weakfish. The Commission has notified the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior of its finding. This action was taken pursuant to the provisions of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act of 1993.

The State of North Carolina has not implemented the required management measures of Addendum IV. These include a one fish recreational creel limit, 100 pound commercial trip limit, 100 pound commercial bycatch limit, and 100 undersized fish per trip allowance for the finfish trawl fishery. Implementation of these regulations is necessary to rebuild weakfish, which are considered depleted with spawning stock biomass estimated to be three percent of an unfished stock, well below the management program's 20 percent threshold and 30 percent target reference points.

In order to come back into compliance the State of North Carolina must implement all measures contained in Addendum IV. Upon notification by the Commission, the Secretary of Commerce has 30 days to review the recommendation and determine appropriate action, which may include a federal moratorium on fishing for weakfish in North Carolina's state waters. For more information, please contact Robert Beal, Director, Interstate Fisheries Management Program, at (202) 289-6400.

In a separate action, the Weakfish Technical Committee was tasked with reviewing a proposal to address the bycatch of weakfish in fisheries targeting other species. The Technical Committee is expected to report back to the Weakfish Management Board at the Commission's Summer Meeting.

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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.

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