



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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Horseshoe Crab Board Extends Addendum V Provisions to Fall 2010

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved extending the provisions of Addendum V to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Horseshoe Crab for an additional year as it awaits the results of the upcoming peer-reviewed stock assessment.

Addendum V’s measures include a delayed, male-only harvest in New Jersey and Delaware, prohibiting the harvest and landing of male and female horseshoe crabs from January 1 through June 7 in the Delaware Bay, and restricting the annual harvest to 100,000 males per state from June 8 through December 31. As with all Commission plans, states can implement more conservative management measures. In the case of New Jersey, it currently maintains a moratorium on the harvest and landing of horseshoe crab.

The Addendum also requires a delayed harvest in Maryland, prohibiting horseshoe crab harvest and landings from January 1 through June 7 and prohibits landing of horseshoe crabs in Virginia from waters outside the Bay from January 1 through June 7. No more than forty percent of Virginia’s quota may be landed from ocean waters and those landings must be comprised of a minimum male to female ratio of 2:1.

The Addendum’s measures seek to address the needs of the migratory shorebirds, particularly the red knot, while allowing a limited commercial bait fishery. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Shorebird Technical Committee has indicated that the red knot, one of many shorebird species that feed upon horseshoe crab eggs, remains stable at very low population levels. Red knots have shown no sign of recovery, despite a nearly 70 percent reduction in horseshoe crab landings since 1998.

Based on the most recent surveys of horseshoe crabs, management measures over the last several years have resulted in increased juvenile abundance and no trend in adult abundance in the Delaware Bay region. A horseshoe crab trawl survey administered by Virginia Tech shows no significant trend across all horseshoe crab ages and sexes over the past six years. However, the Virginia Tech coastal survey and a Delaware Bay survey continue to show increased recruitment of juvenile crabs. A survey of spawning crabs on the beaches of Delaware Bay indicates stable female and male spawning activity over the past nine years.

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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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