



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 Approves Omnibus Amendment for Spot, Spotted Seatrout and Spanish Mackerel

Alexandria, VA – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has approved the Omnibus Amendment for Spot, Spotted Seatrout, and Spanish Mackerel. The Amendment updates all three plans with requirements under the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (1993) and the Interstate Fishery Management Program Charter (1995). All three species represent a large draw for commercial and recreational fishermen in the Mid- and South Atlantic regions with a combined coastwide commercial catch of 12.6 million pounds and a recreational harvest of 14.3 million fish.

The updates to the plans include commercial and recreational management measures and recommendations, adaptive management options, *de minimis* thresholds and exemptions, and monitoring recommendations. The South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board adopted these management measures and options after considering public input and technical input from the Plan Development Team. The Omnibus Amendment will be implemented July 1, 2012.

Spanish mackerel is jointly managed by both the Commission and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC). Due to data limitations, the most recent stock assessment was not successful in establishing specific values for reference points. The original interstate FMP included a process to review and maintain consistency with federal management, which is essential to maintaining good conservation measures. Over the years, however, both federal and state regulations have changed, while the interstate FMP has remained unchanged. To address this consistency issue, the Omnibus Amendment includes both adaptive management measures as well as a process for Board review and action in response to changes in the federal regulations, which will allow for greater uniformity across the jurisdictions. Currently, the federal FMP has a proposed Amendment 18, which is scheduled for a final vote by the SAFMC at its August meeting. The proposed Amendment 18 changes are included in the current Omnibus Amendment.

The original Spot and the Spotted Seatrout FMPs included no requirements for either management or monitoring. The Omnibus Amendment includes a management trigger for spot, which will help the Board in monitoring the status of the stock until a full coastwide stock assessment can be completed. High levels of spot bycatch present a challenge for managers, in terms of both yearly management and overall assessment of the stock health. For spotted seatrout, the Omnibus Amendment includes recommended measures to protect the spawning stock as well as a required coastwide minimum size. These measures will

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.

be essential as increased coastal development presents management challenges to this localized species. Coupled with adaptive management measures, the Omnibus Amendment will provide options for both species to efficiently implement management measures should the Board determine that such measures are needed in the future.

The Omnibus Amendment is available on the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News or can be obtained by contacting the Commission at 703.842.0740. For more information, please contact Danielle Brzezinski, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at dbrzezinski@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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