Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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ASMFC American Eel Board Approves Draft Addendum V for Public Comment

Arlington, VA – The Commission's American Eel Management Board (Board) approved American Eel Draft Addendum V for public comment. The Draft Addendum proposes alternative coastwide landings caps, management triggers, state-by-state allocations, and transfer provisions for the yellow eel commercial fishery; as well as alternatives to the current Maine glass eel commercial quota and the aquaculture provisions of the plan. The Board initiated Draft Addendum V in October 2017 in response to concerns over the management program as specified in Addendum IV.

Currently, the yellow eel fishery is managed to an annual coastwide landings cap of 907,671 pounds. The coastwide cap is evaluated against two management triggers: (1) the coastwide cap is exceeded by more than 10% in a given year; or (2) the coastwide cap is exceeded for two consecutive years, regardless of the percent overage. If either of these triggers are tripped, state by state quotas will be implemented. 2016 landings exceeded the coastwide cap by less than ten percent. If landings in 2017 exceeded the coastwide cap by any amount, state-by-state quotas would be implemented. The Board expressed concern that the current management triggers do not account for annual fluctuations in landings and the immediate implementation of state-by-state quotas would pose significant administrative challenges. Draft Addendum V proposes alternatives to the coastwide cap, management triggers, state-by-state allocations and transfer provisions to address the Board concerns.

Draft Addendum V proposes alternative quota levels for the Maine glass eel fishery. Specifically, increasing the quota above the 2015-2018 level of 9,688 pounds. The Draft Addendum also proposes changes to the aquaculture provisions of the plan. It includes an option that would allow contiguously bordered states to pool their 200 pound glass eel aquaculture allowance, up to a maximum of 600 pounds.

It is anticipated the majority of states from Maine through Florida will be conducting public hearings on the Draft Addendum. The details of those hearings will be released in a subsequent press release. The Draft Addendum will be available on the Commission's website, www.asmfc.org (under Public Input) this spring. For more information on American eel, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior FMP Coordinator, at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org.

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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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