Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

1050 N. Highland Street • Suite 200A-N • Arlington, VA 22201
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MEMORANDUM

January 15, 2016

To: American Lobster Management Board

From: Law Enforcement Committee

RE: Jonah Crab bycatch limits

The Law Enforcement Committee (LEC) of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) met via conference call on January 7, 2016 to review and provide comments on proposed bycatch limits for Jonah crab harvest. The following members were in attendance:

LEC: Capt. Steve Anthony (NC); Deputy Chief Kurt Blanchard (RI); Deputy Chief Jon Cornish (ME); Deputy Director Chisolm Frampton (SC); Asst. Director Larry Furlong (PA); Special Agent-in- Charge Honora Gordon (USFWS); Capt. Jamie Green (VA); Asst. Chief Wayne Hettenbach (USDOJ); Capt. Rob Kersey (MD); Capt. Bob Lynn (GA); Capt. Doug Messeck (DE); Maj. Pat Moran (MA); Director Kyle Overturf (CT); Lt. Colby Schlaht (USCG); Lt. Jason Snellbaker (NJ); Capt. Rama Shuster (FL)

LEC ALTERNATES: Jeff Ray (NOAA OLE); Tom Gadomski (NY)

OTHER ATTENDEES: Col. Jim Kelley (NC); Maj. Dean Nelson (NC); Chief Dean Hoxsie (RI); Todd Mathes (NCDEQ); Jason Rock (NCDEQ)

STAFF: Mark Robson; Mike Waine; Megan Ware

The ASMFC is considering changes to bycatch allowances for Jonah Crab in Draft Addendum I of the Jonah Crab Interstate Fishery Management Plan. The LEC reviewed 3 options for a bycatch limit in the plan:
A count limit (1,000 crabs).
A poundage limit (1,000 pounds).
A volumetric limit based on the number of crates.

The consensus of the LEC is that a bycatch limit based on the number of crabs (count) is preferable in this fishery. As there will be a minimum size-limit and a prohibition on possession of egg-bearing females, officers will likely need to examine individual crabs when inspecting catches. Since handling crabs would be required anyway, checking bycatch limits based on the number of crabs would be more feasible and practical. Other comments suggested that bycatch limits based on volume, as with a set number of crates or bushels would also be workable from an enforcement perspective. Regardless of the type of limit, as bycatch limits increase the time and effort required to check catches also increases significantly.

Based on experience with the fishery to date and its limited landings from non-trap gear, LEC members expressed concern that large bycatch allowances, particularly in non-trap gear, could result in directed efforts that may increase gear conflicts in the future.

The LEC appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on these bycatch limit options.

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MEMORANDUM

April 10, 2016

To: **American Lobster Management Board**

From: **Law Enforcement Committee**

RE: **Jonah Crab Draft Addendum I**

The LEC met via teleconference call on March 11, 2016 to review draft management options for Jonah Crab as identified in Draft Addendum I. The following members were in attendance:

LEC: Capt. Steve Anthony (NC); Deputy Chief Kurt Blanchard (RI); Chief Jon Cornish (ME); Lt. Michael Eastman (NH); Lt. Col. Larry Furlong (PA); Special Agent-in-Charge Honora Gordon (USFWS); Capt. Robert Kersey (MD); Capt. Doug Messeck (DE); Major Pat Moran (MA); Director Kyle Overturf (CT); Capt. Jason Snellbaker (NJ)

LEC ALTERNATE: Asst. Special Agent-in-Charge Jeff Ray (NOAA OLE)

STAFF: Mark Robson; Megan Ware; Ashton Harp; Max Appelman

After reviewing proposed bycatch options for the non-trap and non-lobster-trap harvest of Jonah crab, the LEC reiterates its previous positions and rationales for bycatch limits as described in memoranda to the American Lobster Board, dated July 24, 2015 and January 15, 2016. These comments include the concern that large bycatch limits, particularly for non-trap gear, could result in directed efforts that may increase gear conflicts in the future. Furthermore, increases to the bycatch limit will significantly increase the time required by enforcement personnel to inspect the catch.

For Issue 1, Non-Trap Gear, the LEC continues to support the adopted measure (Option A-status quo) of 200 crabs per calendar day and up to 500 crabs per trip incidental bycatch limits.

For Issue 2, Non-Lobster-Trap Gear, the LEC recommends adopting Option B specifying an incidental bycatch limit of 200 crabs per day, up to 500 crabs per trip, for trips three days or longer.

The LEC appreciates the opportunity to provide advice and recommendations to the American Lobster Board for the continued development of the management plan for Jonah Crab.