



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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Horseshoe Crab Board Sets 2025 Specifications for Horseshoe Crabs of Delaware Bay-Origin and Initiates Draft Addendum IX to Consider Multi-Year Specifications

Annapolis, MD – The Commission’s Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved harvest specifications for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay-origin. Taking into consideration the output of the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework, the Board set a harvest limit of 500,000 male horseshoe crabs and zero female Delaware Bay-origin horseshoe crabs for the 2025 season.

The Board elected to maintain zero female horseshoe crab harvest for the 2025 season as a conservative measure, considering continued public concern about the status of the red knot population in the Delaware Bay. To make up for the lost harvest of larger female crabs, the Board agreed to increase Maryland and Virginia’s male harvest quotas with an offset ratio of 2:1 males to females. Using the allocation methodology established in Addendum VIII, the following quotas were set for New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia:

	Delaware Bay Origin Horseshoe Crab Quota (no. of crabs)	Total Quota**
State	Male Only	Male Only
Delaware	173,014	173,014
New Jersey	173,014	173,014
Maryland	132,865	255,980
Virginia*	21,107	81,331

*Virginia harvest refers to harvest east of the COLREGS line only

**Total harvest quotas for Maryland and Virginia include crabs which are not of Delaware Bay origin.

The Board also initiated Draft Addendum XI, which will consider adding an additional specifications tool that would allow for male-only harvest for multiple years. The Draft Addendum responds to recommendations from the Horseshoe Crab Management Objectives Workshop held in July 2024. The Workshop convened a small group of stakeholders to explore management objectives for the Delaware Bay-origin horseshoe crab fishery. The workshop participants recommended the Board establish an interim solution to maintain male-only harvest while changes to the ARM Framework are explored to better align the model with stakeholder values.

The Board will consider Draft Addendum IX for public comment in February 2025. For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740. PR24-30

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 diadromous species.