



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

1050 N. Highland Street • Suite 200A-N • Arlington, VA 22201  
703.842.0740 • 703.842.0741 (fax) • [www.asmf.org](http://www.asmf.org)

---

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** American Lobster Management Board

**FROM:** Draft Addendum XXVIII Lobster Plan Development Team

**DATE:** April 23, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Draft Addendum XXVIII Progress

In February, the American Lobster Board (Board) initiated Draft Addendum XXVIII to reduce the number of vertical lines in the lobster fishery (see full motion at the end of the memo). The Board acknowledged the need to respond proactively to the growing challenges facing the lobster fishery and North Atlantic Right Whale recovery, in order to ensure effective conservation measures can occur in a manner that preserves, to the extent practicable, the lobster fishery and its culture.

The Plan Development Team (PDT) was tasked with completing a draft addendum for public comment for Board review at the Commission's 2019 Spring Meeting Week. The PDT has met weekly since early March to develop a document and has made significant progress. As part of the Take Reduction Team (TRT) support, collaborators working on updating a vertical line model and the TRT's co-occurrence model identified a way to use existing information and the input of the TRT to model the current risk landscape and to compare risk reduction elements effect on the landscape called the Risk Reduction Decision Support Tool (RRDST). However, due to the timing of data and the decision support tool delivery, as well as the complexity of the issue, the PDT is unable to present a document for Board review at the Commission's Spring Meeting.

The intersection of lobster management and whale conservation is complex and thus has required the PDT to work through many issues including data sources and a pending risk reduction support tool. The PDT was tasked with reducing the number of end lines in the lobster fishery, a fishery in which all states do not require the reporting of end lines in harvester reports. Absent of a comprehensive and consistently collected set of end line data, the PDT is dependent upon IEC (A NOAA contractor) end line data that was updated in coordination with New England states, and released on April 1, 2019. The PDT is still trying to reconcile the difference in how data are collected by jurisdiction and how those differences impact the ability to quantify end lines.

As the PDT was developing the draft, NOAA Fisheries staff announced the agency would be making the risk reduction decision support tool available for use by the TRT to assist in the comparison between potential risk reduction scenarios at the TRT's meeting during the end of April.

As described by NOAA Fisheries, the RRDST could provide insight on potential impacts proposed management options would have on risk to whales. While the task to the PDT was to reduce the number of endlines in the fishery, how NOAA Fisheries will evaluate the potential of various management options to reduce the risk to North Atlantic Right Whales is unknown at this time. In order to provide a complete and comprehensive document for Board review, the PDT will need to have a better understanding of the RRDST.

Below the PDT has identified areas where the team has made progress and challenges that have complicated the team's ability to complete a draft addendum for Board review in advance of the April meeting. The PDT remains dedicated to developing this document in a thoughtful and thorough manner for Board review during the Summer Meeting Week.

### **PDT Areas of Concern:**

#### **1. Data (number of end lines for state and Federal Permit holders by LCMA)**

##### Progress:

1. Agreed to use total monthly end lines from 2017 as a recommended baseline year, if there can be a discussion of different credit by area for reductions that occurred in 2015 and 2016.
2. Agreed to use MA and NH state data to get total monthly end lines for 2017
3. Agreed to use 2017 IEC data for all other states and Federal waters to get total monthly end lines for 2017
4. The PDT identified challenge #3 below and agreed how to collect the needed data elements moving forward.

##### Challenges:

1. Understanding how Addendum XVIII trap reductions impact end lines. How far back in time should the PDT give credit? Should the PDT take into account attrition in the fishery in that timeframe?
  - a. Trap reductions in LCMA 2 and 3 began ahead of the start of the 2016 fishing year. Therefore those states are interested in credit for those trap reductions; however, the Biological opinion will use a baseline year no earlier than 2017. The PDT is challenged in how to reconcile the difference in those years and give credit to those areas.
2. How to measure end line reductions for current closures? If states are to receive credit for current closures, what method should be used to determine credit?
3. Reconcile the difference in how data are collected by jurisdiction and how it impacts the ability to quantify end lines (the different tools to collect the data e.g. VTRs vs annual recall and the different data fields (e.g. daily buoy lines vs monthly buoy lines)).

## 2. Risk Reduction Model (RRM)

### Progress:

1. Recommend LCMA 5 not be included in the addendum because there are currently no proposals south of the 40 degree line from the TRT. This may need to be revisited after the TRT meeting, depending on recommendations.

### Challenge:

1. As of April 17<sup>th</sup> the RRDST has not been released in full. The PDT was provided with a preview of the RRDST on April 10<sup>th</sup> and the model concept was released to the TRT on April 16<sup>th</sup> but a fully functioning RRDST had not been released by NOAA. The PDT needs to understand the risk levels to draft options for the addendum.
2. There is not RRDST for LCMA 4 at this time.

## 3. Additional Challenges:

1. The Take Reduction Team Meeting (TRT) is April 23-26, 2019. The PDT will not know the outcome of the TRT recommendation, yet measures could impact the options in the addendum (e.g. if the TRT has an area closure where traps are required to come out of the water then end lines would be decreased).
2. How to evaluate adopted measures in future years? Will the IEC data be updated in the future in order to measure success of management tools? If so, once there is 100% reporting, can evaluation of success be calibrated with the IEC model's evaluation?
3. How does the PDT balance the desire for state flexibility in choosing management tools within an LCMA with the need for consistency in Federal waters for all users within that LCMA?

## Board Motion

*Move to initiate an addendum to reduce the number of vertical lines in the water. The PDT should consider the following as specified in the Lobster-Whale Work Group Memo. The PDT may need to consider the ongoing activities of the ALWTRT when drafting this document.*

- *Reduction of vertical lines by 20% to 40% for each LCMA (exclusive of LCMA 6). Percent reductions by LCMA may differ given ongoing and future trap reductions as well as newly proposed or implemented area closures in state and federal waters.*
- *In LCMAs 1, 4, 5, and OCC: reductions can be achieved by trap limits, gear configurations, season closures, or other measures.*
- *In LCMAs 2 and 3: reductions can be achieved by gear configurations, seasonal closures, acceleration of current planned trap reduction, or other measures.*
- *Elimination of the 10% replacement trap tag provision.*
- *Developing a method for reporting vertical line and trap use by individuals in each jurisdiction until 100% harvester reporting is implemented in state and federal waters. Motion made by Mr. Borden and seconded by Mr. Grout. Motion carries (11 in favor).*