Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Horseshoe Crab Board Approves Draft Addendum IX for Public Comment to Consider Multi-Year Specifications for Male-Only Harvest

Arlington, VA – The Commission's Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved Draft Addendum IX for public comment. The Draft Addendum considers allowing the Board to set specifications for male-only harvest for multiple years. It also considers alternative methods for managing male-only harvest limits, seasonal harvest restrictions, and harvest caps for Maryland and Virginia.

Draft Addendum IX responds to recommendations from the July 2024 Horseshoe Crab Management Objectives Workshop, which convened a 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 Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework are explored to better align the model with stakeholder values. Additionally, the Draft Addendum proposes an alternative method for setting maximum male harvest limits based on Delaware Bay region spawning survey data in years when the ARM Framework is not used.

Regarding seasonal closures for the Delaware Bay region states, Draft Addendum IX includes two options: to maintain the current seasonal closure of May 1 through June 7 or reestablish the longer closure from January 1 through June 7. The Board also added options to the Draft Addendum to establish a rule for applying Maryland and Virginia harvest caps included in Addenda VII and VIII.

A press release will follow with details on the public hearing schedule and how to submit written comments. The Board will meet to review submitted comments and consider final action on the addendum at its next meeting. For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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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 diadromous species.