Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 9, 2023

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Corrected American Lobster Draft Addendum XXVII Available for Public Comment

Arlington, VA – An error has been identified in the previously released Draft Addendum XXVII to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster for public comment. Specifically, Section 3.2 (Issue 2, Option C) should have contained three steps in the proposed maximum gauge size changes for Area 3 and Outer Cape Cod rather than only two. The revised draft is available at https://asmfc.org/files/AmericanLobster/AmLobsterDraftAddendumXXVII_PublicComment_Revised.pdf and the public comment deadline has been extended to April 8, 2023.

The Draft Addendum considers measures to increase protection of the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank (GOM/GBK) spawning stock. Atlantic coastal states of Maine through New York are conducting hearings to gather public input on the Draft Addendum; some hearings will be conducted in-person, and some hearings will be conducted via webinar. Additional details on participating in the webinars can be found later in this release.

Maine has already conducted two hearings on March 7 & 8 and New Hampshire conducted its hearing on March 8. The details for the remaining hearings are as follows:

Hearing Date	State/Agency and Hearing Location	Contact
Thursday, March 9 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.	**Maine Dept. of Marine Resources** Ellsworth High School Cafeteria 24 Lejok Street, Ellsworth, ME 04605	Megan Ware, 207.446.0932
Tuesday, March 14 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.	**New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation** *Webinar Hearing*	John Maniscalco, 631.444.0437
Wednesday, March 15 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.	**Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries** *Webinar Hearing*	Dan McKiernan, 617.626.1536
Thursday, March 16 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.	**Rhode Island Dept. of Environmental Management** *Webinar Hearing*	Jason McNamee, 401.222.4700

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.

The American Lobster Management Board initiated Addendum XXVII in 2017 as a proactive measure to improve the resiliency of the GOM/GBK stock, responding to signs of reduced juvenile settlement and the combining of the GOM and GBK stocks following the 2015 Stock Assessment. Work on this addendum was paused due to the prioritization of work on take reduction efforts for North Atlantic right whales and the 2020 stock assessment. The Board reinitiated work on Draft Addendum XXVII in February 2021, and has since revised its goal to consider a trigger mechanism such that measures would be automatically implemented to increase the overall protection of the GOM/GBK spawning stock when a defined trigger level is reached. Draft Addendum XXVII also considers the standardization of management measures across Lobster Conservation Management Areas with the goal of providing a consistent conservation strategy and simplifying enforcement across management areas and interstate commerce.

Webinar Instructions
For all virtual hearings, please note that in order to comment during webinar hearings you will need to use your computer or download the GoToWebinar app for your phone. Those joining by phone only will be limited to listening to the presentation and will not be able to provide input. In those cases, you can send comments to staff via email or U.S. mail at any time during the public comment period. To attend the webinar in listen only mode, dial 213-929-4212 and enter access code 210-711-884.

For all virtual hearings, please click HERE and select the hearing(s) you plan to attend from the dropdown menu to register for a public hearing webinar. Hearings will be held via GoToWebinar, and you can join the webinar from your computer, tablet or smartphone. If you are new to GoToWebinar, you can download the software by (clicking here) or via the App store under GoToWebinar. We recommend you register for the hearing well in advance of the hearing since GoToWebinar will provide you with a link to test your device's compatibility with the webinar. If you find your device is not compatible, please contact the Commission at info@asmfc.org (subject line: GoToWebinar help) and we will try to get you connected. We also strongly encourage participants to **use the computer voice over internet (VoIP)** so you can ask questions and provide input at the hearing.

Hearing Presentation Recording
For those who cannot attend any in-person or virtual hearings, a recording of the hearing presentation can be found on the Commission's Public Input page to allow stakeholders to watch the presentation and submit comment at any time during the comment process.

Submitting Comments
The Draft Addendum is available at
https://asmfc.org/files/AmericanLobster/AmLobsterDraftAddendumXXVII_PublicComment_Revised.pdf
or via the Commission's website at http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/public-input. All those interested in the management of American lobster are encouraged to provide input either by participating in public hearings, which may be conducted via webinar, or providing written comment. Public comment will be accepted until **11:59 PM (EST) on April 8, 2023** and should be sent to Caitlin Starks, Senior FMP Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201; or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Lobster Draft Addendum XXVII).

If your organization is planning to release an action alert in response to the Draft Amendment, please contact Caitlin Starks at cstarks@asmfc.orfg or 703.842.0740, so she can work with you to develop a unique subject line to enable us to better organize and summarize comments for Board review.