



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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American Lobster Board Approves for Public Comment Draft Addendum XXXII to Repeal Gauge and Escape Vent Measures of Addendum XXVII

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s American Lobster Management Board approved Draft Addendum XXXII for public comment. Responding to economic concerns from the lobster industry, the Draft Addendum considers repealing all Addendum XXVII measures pertaining to gauge and escape vent size limits. Concurrently, the Gulf of Maine states will work closely with industry to identify alternative conservation strategies and will report back to the Board at upcoming quarterly meetings.

Under Addendum XXVII, changes to the current gauge and escape vent sizes in Lobster Conservation Management Areas (LCMAs) 1 (Gulf of Maine), 3 (federal offshore waters), and Outer Cape Cod were triggered based on observed declines in recruit abundance indices, with the original implementation date of June 1, 2024. In August 2024, the Board delayed the implementation date so that the series of changes to gauge and vent sizes, starting with an increase to the minimum gauge size in LCMA 1, would begin July 1, 2025.

Addendum XXVII aimed to increase protection of the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank spawning stock biomass through proactive conservation measures. While the overall stock condition is favorable according to the 2020 Benchmark Stock Assessment, persistent declines in the juvenile lobster population, and now in landings, remain a cause for concern. A new stock assessment is underway and will be completed this fall to provide updated information on the status of the resource.

Draft Addendum XXXII considers two options: full implementation of Addendum XXVII by July 1, 2025 or repealing all of its gauge and escape vent measures. The Draft Addendum does not consider changes to regulations prohibiting the issuance of 10% additional trap tags above the trap limit or allocation in LCMAs 1 and 3, nor to the v-notch possession definition provision of Addendum XXVII.

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 Plan 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.

Motions

Main Motion

Move to add an item to option B in the addendum that says that Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts will provide for the Board by the Winter 2026 Meeting consensus positions to be the basis of future addendum actions affecting the biological productivity of the GOM lobster fishery.

Motion made by Mr. Hasbrouck and seconded by Mr. Kaelin. Motion postponed.

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute with “Move to add an item to option B in the draft addendum that says that Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts will provide for the Board by the Winter 2026 meeting state consensus positions.”

Motion made by Mr. Borden and seconded by Mr. Abbott. Motion postponed.

Move to postpone to the May 2025 meeting.

Motion made by Ms. Ware and seconded by Mr. Gates. Motion passes (8 in favor, 1 abstention, 1 null).

Move to approve Draft Addendum XXXII for public comment.

Motion made by Ms. Ware and seconded by Mr. Borden. Motion passes by consensus with 1 abstention (NOAA).