



# ***Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission***

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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*Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

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### **ASMFC Initiates Stakeholder Engagement Process to Inform Revisions to the Utility, Reward, and Harvest Policy Functions of the ARM Framework**

#### ***Stakeholders Invited to Apply by October 3 Deadline***

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Horseshoe Crab Management Board is initiating a collaborative stakeholder process to inform revisions to the Delaware Bay Horseshoe Crab Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework. The [ARM Framework](#) is a model used to provide annual harvest levels for horseshoe crabs in the Delaware Bay region, and is designed to balance the needs of the horseshoe crab fishery with the ecological needs of migratory shorebirds, which depend on horseshoe crab eggs as a food source.

Building on previous recommendations developed at the [2025 Delaware Bay Management Objectives Workshop of the ARM Framework](#), this process will focus on reviewing and revising the core mathematical functions of the ARM model—specifically the Utility, Reward, and Harvest Policy (U/R/H) functions. Combined, these functions incorporate stakeholder values to determine the optimal harvest level given the estimated numbers of horseshoe crabs and red knots. The goal of this process is to elicit stakeholder values and perspectives to develop clear, actionable recommendations for revising the U/R/H functions, ensuring they are technically sound and transparently reflect diverse stakeholder priorities (i.e., horseshoe crab and shorebird conservation interests, biomedical needs, and commercial fishery demand).

The stakeholder process will occur between October 2025 and May 2026 and will use a phased approach including educational sessions to build a shared understanding of the ARM Framework and U/R/H functions; a two-day workshop in January 2026, using a structured dialogue among participating groups to develop quantitative values that can be integrated into the model, and model updates to integrate stakeholder values and input into the next iteration of the ARM Framework. The Commission has retained Compass Resource Management to be neutral third-party facilitators and analysts for this process. Participants will represent bait fisheries; biomedical groups; dealers; ecosystem, shorebird, and horseshoe crab conservation and science planning groups; and state and federal resource managers.

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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.

Stakeholders that would like to participate in this important conversation on the management of the Delaware Bay horseshoe crab resource are invited to apply. [Applications should be submitted here](#) by **October 3, 2025**. To foster a productive and focused discussion, the number of active workshop participants will be limited. Those who are not selected as active participants are welcome to participate in small group interviews and educational sessions, and to attend the workshop as observers.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [cstarks@asmfc.org](mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org).

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