



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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ASMFC Horseshoe Crab Board Sets 2020 Specifications for Horseshoe Crabs of Delaware Bay Origin

New Castle, NH – The Commission’s Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved the harvest specifications for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin. Under the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework, the Board set a harvest limit of 500,000 Delaware Bay male horseshoe crabs and zero female horseshoe crabs for the 2020 season. Based on the allocation mechanism established in Addendum VII, the following quotas were set for the States of New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland and the Commonwealth of Virginia, which harvest horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin:

	Delaware Bay Origin Horseshoe Crab Quota (no. of crabs)	Total Quota**
State	Male Only	Male Only
Delaware	162,136	162,136
New Jersey	162,136	162,136
Maryland	141,112	255,980
Virginia*	34,615	81,331

*Virginia harvest refers to harvest east of the COLREGS line only

** Total male harvest includes crabs which are not of Delaware Bay origin.

The Board chose a harvest package based on the Delaware Bay Ecosystem Technical Committee’s and ARM Subcommittee’s recommendation. The ARM Framework, established through Addendum VII, incorporates both shorebird and horseshoe crab abundance levels to set optimized harvest levels for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin. The horseshoe crab abundance estimate was based on data from the Benthic Trawl Survey conducted by Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Virginia Tech). This survey, which is the primary data source for assessing Delaware Bay horseshoe crab abundance for the past two years, as well as the ongoing benchmark stock assessment, does not have a consistent funding source. However, due to the efforts of three Senators and six Representatives – namely, Senators Chris Coons (D-DE), Tom Carper (D-DE), Cory Booker (D-NJ); and Representatives Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ), Lisa Blunt-Rochester (D-DE), Donald Norcross (D-NJ), Chris Smith (R-NJ), and Bill Pascrell (D-NJ) – and the support of NOAA Fisheries, annual funding for the survey has been provided since 2016. They have also requested that NOAA Fisheries incorporate the survey into the agency’s annual budget.

For more information, please contact Dr. Michael Schmidtke, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 703.842.0740 or mschmidtke@asmfc.org.

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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.