



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission NEWS RELEASE

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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ASMFC Horseshoe Crab Board Sets 2016 Specifications for Horseshoe Crabs of Delaware Bay Origin

St. Augustine, FL – 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 2016 season. Based on the allocation mechanism established in Addendum VII, the following quotas were set for the states of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and 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

The Board chose a harvest management program based on the Technical Committee and ARM Subcommittee 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. Previously the horseshoe crab abundance estimate was based on data from the Benthic Trawl Survey conducted by Virginia Polytechnic Institute, however, due to the Benthic Trawl Survey not having been conducted in recent years, a composite index of the Delaware 30ft Trawl Survey, New Jersey Delaware Bay Trawl Survey, and New Jersey Ocean Trawl Survey was used instead. Funding has been secured for the Benthic Trawl Survey to be conducted in 2016.

The Horseshoe Crab Technical Committee, Delaware Bay Ecosystem Technical Committee, and the ARM Subcommittee also recommended the ARM Framework be reviewed and updated in 2016. The Board agreed with this recommendation, with specific interest in re-considering the thresholds to allow the

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 anadromous species.

harvest of female horseshoe crabs, as well as the recent listing of red knot as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The ARM Subcommittee will develop specific recommendations to the Board on changes to the ARM Framework in 2016.

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