Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

ASMFC Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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ASMFC Atlantic Striped Bass Board Approves Addendum IV for Implementation in 2015

Mystic, CT – The Commission's Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board approved Addendum IV to Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass. The Addendum establishes new fishing mortality (F) reference points, as recommended by the 2013 benchmark stock assessment. In order to reduce F to a level at or below the new target, coastal states will implement a 25% harvest reduction from 2013 levels. Chesapeake Bay states/jurisdictions will implement a 20.5% harvest reduction from 2012 levels since their fisheries were reduced by 14% in 2013 based on their management program. All states/jurisdictions will promulgate regulations prior to the start of their 2015 fisheries.

Atlantic striped bass tagged and released as part of the Striped Bass Hook and Line Tagging Survey

"I congratulate members of the Management Board for making tough choices yesterday to ensure the long-term health and viability of our striped bass fishery resources," stated Board Chair Douglas Grout of New Hampshire. "The Board struck an important balance in taking immediate action to reduce fishing mortality back to the target while also recognizing the unique characteristics of the Chesapeake Bay fisheries. The action will assure a more rapid increase in the abundance of spawning fish which has been declining in recent years."

The Addendum responds to results of the 2013 Atlantic striped bass benchmark assessment indicating F in 2012 was above the new F target, and female spawning stock biomass (SSB) has been steadily declining below the target level since 2006. This means even though the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring, SSB is approaching its overfished threshold and stock projections show SSB will likely fall below the threshold in the coming years. In addition, a similar decline has been observed in total harvest.

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.

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The Addendum includes changes to the coastal commercial quota and the coastal recreational fishery to achieve reductions in 2015. Commercial quotas established in Amendment 6 will be reduced by 25% while maintaining current size limits to minimize discard mortality. The Board also maintained no transfer of unused commercial quotas as a conservation benefit to the resource. The coastal recreational fishery harvest will be reduced by implementing a one fish bag limit while keeping a 28" size limit. Under Amendment 6, states may use conservation equivalency to develop state-specific measures that are different than a one fish bag limit and 28" size limit for their coastal fisheries but still achieve a 25% reduction in harvest.

The Chesapeake Bay states/jurisdictions will reduce their 2012 Bay commercial harvest level by 20.5% and will submit conservation equivalency proposals to achieve a 20.5% reduction from the Bay recreational fishery. The Technical Committee will continue to work on Chesapeake Bay specific reference points for future management.

The Addendum will be implemented on January 1, 2015. The Technical Committee will review any submitted conservation equivalency proposals by the states and the Board will review and consider approval of those proposals at the Commission's Winter Meeting in Alexandria, VA.

Addendum IV will be made available on the Commission's website, www.asmfc.org, under *Breaking News* by mid-November. For more information, please contact Mike Waine, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at mwaine@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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