Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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ASMFC American Lobster Board Approves Draft Addenda XXVI & III to the American Lobster and Jonah Crab FMPs for Public Comment

Norfolk, VA – The Commission's American Lobster Management Board approved American Lobster Draft Addendum XXVI/Jonah Crab Draft Addendum III for public comment. Given the same data collection needs apply to both American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries, Draft Addendum XXVI and Draft Addendum III are combined into one document that would modify management programs for both species upon its adoption. The Draft Addenda seek to improve harvest reporting and biological data collection in the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries. The Draft Addenda propose using the latest reporting technology, expanding the collection of effort data, increasing the spatial resolution of harvester reporting, and advancing the collection of biological data, particularly offshore.

Recent management action in the Northwest Atlantic, including the protection of deep sea corals, the declaration of a national monument, and the expansion of offshore wind projects, have highlighted deficiencies in current American lobster and Jonah crab reporting requirements. These include a lack of spatial resolution in harvester data and a significant number of fishermen who are not required to report. As a result, efforts to estimate the economic impacts of these various management actions on American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries have been hindered. States have been forced to piece together information from harvester reports, industry surveys, and fishermen interviews to gather the information needed. In addition, as American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries continue to expand offshore, there is a greater disconnect between where the fishery is being prosecuted and where biological sampling is occurring. More specifically, while most of the sampling occurs in state waters, an increasing volume of American lobster and Jonah crab are being harvested in federal waters. The lack of biological information on the offshore portions of these fisheries can impede effective management.

The Draft Addenda present three questions for public comment: (1) what percentage of harvesters should be required to report in the American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries; (2) should current data

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.

elements be expanded to collect a greater amount of information in both fisheries; and (3) at what scale should spatial information be collected. In addition, the Draft Addenda provide several recommendations to NOAA Fisheries for data collection of offshore American lobster and Jonah crab fisheries. These include implementation of a harvester reporting requirement for federal lobster permit holders, creation of a fixed-gear VTR form, and expansion of a biological sampling program offshore.

It is anticipated the majority of states from Maine through New Jersey will be conducting public hearings on the Draft Addenda. The details of those hearings will be released in a subsequent press release. The Draft Addenda will be available on the Commission website, www.asmfc.org (under Public Input) by October 27th. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addenda either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM (EST) on January 22, 2017** and should be forwarded to Megan Ware, FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Draft Addenda XXVI & III).

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