Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations of all Atlantic coast fish species, or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Atlantic Herring Section Clarifies Amendment 2 Zero Tolerance Spawning Provision

Arlington, VA – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Atlantic Herring Section approved Technical Addendum I to Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Herring. The Technical Addendum clarifies the zero tolerance spawning provision of Amendment 2 by prohibiting vessels to fish for, take, land, or possess herring from or within a restricted spawning area. Eastern Maine fixed gear fisheries are exempt from spawning restrictions.

Amendment 2, approved in January 2006, revised the spawning tolerance provision of the previous plan from 20% down to zero. Based on discussions between affected states (Maine through New Jersey) it became evident that the language in the draft final plan did not clearly reflect the decision made by the Section in January. Technical Addendum I was developed in order to clarify the language of the spawning tolerance provision.

During spawning closures vessels may fish for, take, land, or possess "spawn" herring from a management area outside those identified as restricted spawning areas. In addition, any herring vessel having onboard spawn herring, which were caught outside of a management area that is under a herring spawning closure, may transit the closed area only if its fishing gear has been stowed. An incidental bycatch allowance of up to 2,000 pounds of herring per trip for non-directed fisheries shall be in place during the spawning closures. This bycatch allowance will not be subject to the tolerance provision, i.e., vessels may land "spawn" herring as long as said vessel lands no more than 2,000 pounds.

For more information, please contact Ruth Christiansen, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or rchristiansen@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 anadromous species.