



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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MEMORANDUM

October 21, 2019

To: Tautog Management Board
From: Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior FMP Coordinator
RE: Update on Implementation of the Commercial Harvest Tagging Program

In August, the Tautog Management Board (Board) requested states with a declared interest in the resource indicate whether they would be able to implement the commercial harvest tagging program by January 1, 2020. Amendment 1 to the Tautog Fishery Management Plan (FMP) requires the implementation of commercial harvest tagging program to combat illegal and unreported harvest of tautog. While the Amendment outlines the tagging program was to be implemented in January 2019, the Board postponed implementation until January 2020 due to issues identifying a suitable tag and applicator.

The following outlines the anticipated implementation date for the commercial tagging program in 2020 by state:

Massachusetts: Will implement the tagging program by **January 1, 2020**

Rhode Island: Will implement the tagging program by **January 1, 2020**

Connecticut: Will implement the tagging program by the start of the 2020 commercial fishing season (**April 1, 2020**)

New York: Will implement the tagging program by the start of the 2020 commercial fishing season (**April 16, 2020**)

New Jersey: Regulatory package to allow New Jersey Division Fish and Wildlife to implement commercial tagging program is anticipated to be approved in early 2020

Delaware: Will implement the tagging program by **January 1, 2020**

Maryland: Will implement the tagging program by **July 1, 2020**

Virginia: Will implement the tagging program by **January 1, 2020**

In addition to the states listed above, Pennsylvania and North Carolina both have fish markets where tautog are sold commercially. Neither state is required to implement the commercial tagging program per Amendment 1. Pennsylvania has yet to determine if it will be able to enforce the commercial tagging requirement in its fish markets.

North Carolina does not plan to implement a commercial tagging program for tautog due to low landings levels; only 511 lbs. have been landed since 2014, with no more than 137 lbs. landed in a given year. The state does plan to conduct outreach to their fishermen and commercial dealers that tautog landed in North Carolina without a tag may not be sold in the states of Massachusetts through Virginia starting next year.

For more information on the tautog commercial harvest program, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org or 703-842-0740.

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