



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*

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ASMFC American Lobster Board Approves Addendum XI *Addendum Establishes Measures to Rebuild SNE Stock of American Lobster*

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s American Lobster Management Board approved Addendum XI to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for American Lobster. The Addendum responds to the findings of the 2005 peer-reviewed stock assessment which called for additional harvest restrictions given the Southern New England (SNE) stock’s depleted stock abundance, low recruitment, and high fishing mortality rates over the past few years. The Addendum’s comprehensive program (minimum and maximum size limits, and trap reductions) is designed to address the peer review’s recommendation for a common biological management strategy for the region.

SNE Rebuilding Program

The Addendum establishes a 15-year rebuilding timeline (ending in 2022) for SNE with a provision to end overfishing immediately. The American Lobster Management Board will monitor the progress of the rebuilding program and consider adjustments if necessary.

The Addendum also institutes a comprehensive rebuilding plan that includes the following management measures for all SNE lobster fisheries (commercial trap, non-trap, as well as recreational harvesters):

- Minimum size of 3 3/8” for all SNE areas (Lobster Conservation Management Areas (LCMAs) 2 - inshore SNE, 4 - inshore Northern Mid-Atlantic, 5 - inshore Southern Mid-Atlantic, and 6 - New York and Connecticut State Waters) except for all Area 3 permit holders (offshore waters) who would still be bound by the schedule of minimum size increases terminating at 3 1/2” in 2008.
- Maximum size for males and females of 5 1/4” for all SNE areas (LCMAs 2, 4, 5 and 6). For vessels fishing in Area 3 the maximum size shall be 7” and shall be lowered 1/8” per year for the following two years resulting in an eventual maximum gauge of 6 3/4”.
- Delay the Area 3 vent size increase that coincides with the minimum gauge increase of 3 1/2” to 2010.

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.

- V-notch definition would be changed to 1/8" for all SNE areas, including Area 3. Under this option a v-notched lobster would be defined as any female lobster that bears a notch or indentation in the flipper at least 1/8" deep, with or without setal hairs. "V-notched female lobster" also means any female that is mutilated in a manner which could hide, obscure or obliterate such a mark.
- V-notching by fishermen of legal egg-bearing lobsters would be a voluntary measure, and fishermen would be encouraged to notch egg-bearing legal-sized females to contribute to rebuilding.
- Area 3 active trap reductions shall be 2 ½ percent per year in 2009 and 2010 (to immediately follow the 2007 and 2008 five percent trap reductions.) Other LCMA-specific trap reductions would be studied for future implementation with LCMT input. The Plan Review Team (PRT) and the Technical Committee would examine the status and relative effectiveness of various effort control plans before future trap reductions are considered. Specifically, the PRT and Committee would study the degree of latent effort that remains in the fisheries as affected by current effort control plans in LCMA's 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Delayed Implementation

Failure to implement any of the following management measures are believed to negatively impact achieving the goals and objectives of management program: required adjustments to minimum gauge size, maximum gauge size, v-notch possession rule, minimum vent size, trap allocation program and quotas or trip limits. To ensure timely implementation of these measures, the Addendum specifies that for each day that a state does not implement any of these management measures, that state's resident lobstermen are prohibited from fishing for or landing lobsters for an equal number of days during the same or equivalent time period in the following year, regardless of the area in which they are authorized to fish or the state in which they are authorized to land.

State proposals to implement the Addendum's requirements are due on November 1, 2007. The Management Board will meet during the Commission 2008 Winter Meeting to review and consider approval of the state plans. All management measures must be implemented by June 30, 2008. Copies of the Addendum will be available by June 1, 2007 and can be obtained via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Senior Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator for Management at (202) 289-6400 or tkerns@asmfc.org.

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