



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ASMFC Horseshoe Crab Board Sets 2015 Specifications for Horseshoe Crabs of Delaware Bay Origin

Mystic, Connecticut – The Commission’s Horseshoe Crab Management Board has approved the harvest specifications for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin. Under the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework, the Board maintained a harvest limit of 500,000 Delaware Bay male horseshoe crabs and zero female horseshoe crabs for the 2015 season. Based on the allocation mechanism established in Addendum VII, the following quotas were set for the states of New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, which harvest horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin:

	Delaware Bay Origin Horseshoe Crab Quota (no. of crabs)	Total Quota
State	Male Only	Male Only
Delaware	162,136	162,136
New Jersey	162,136	162,136
Maryland	141,112	255,980
Virginia*	34,615	81,331

*Virginia harvest refers to harvest east of the COLREGS line only

The Board chose a status quo management program due to the lack of compatible data on horseshoe crab abundance. The ARM Framework, established through Addendum VII, incorporates both shorebird and horseshoe crab abundance levels to set optimized harvest levels for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay origin. The horseshoe crab abundance estimate has been based on data from the Benthic Trawl Survey conducted by Virginia Polytechnic Institute. The Benthic Trawl Survey was not conducted in 2013 or 2014 due to a lack of funding. The Horseshoe Crab Technical Committee reviewed other available data sources, but did not find a suitable option for the ARM Framework. The Technical Committee will continue to investigate other options, while the Commission and states seek long-term funding sources for the Benthic Trawl Survey. The optimized harvest level will be reevaluated annually, allowing for management to adapt to the changes in the population levels of horseshoe crabs and shorebirds as a result of the regulations.

The Board also nominated Dr. Malcolm Rhodes, Governor Appointee from South Carolina as Board Vice-chair. For more information, please contact Marin Hawk, FMP Coordinator, at 703.842.0740 or mhawk@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 diadromous species.