



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

## NEWS RELEASE

*Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

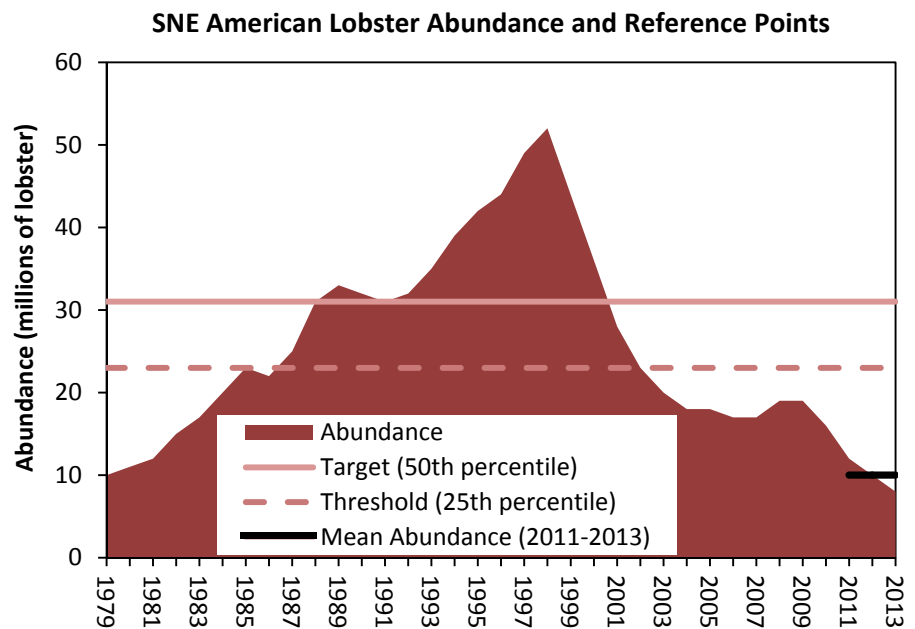
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### ASMFC American Lobster Board Identifies Management Goal and Options for Draft Addendum XXV to Address Southern New England Stock Declines

Alexandria, VA – The American Lobster Management Board approved development of Draft Addendum XXV to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. The Draft Addendum seeks to respond to the depleted condition of the SNE stock while preserving a functional portion of the lobster fishery in this area. The document will present a suite of management measures to increase egg production and lower fishing mortality through a combination of management tools including lobster size and escape vent changes, season closures, and trap limits and reductions.

The Draft Addendum responds to the results of the 2015 American lobster benchmark stock assessment which found the SNE stock severely depleted and undergoing recruitment failure with poor prospects of recovery. Declines in population abundance were most pronounced in the inshore portion of the stock where environmental conditions have remained unfavorable to lobsters since the late 1990s. Despite fleet attrition, stock declines have continued. These declines are largely in response to adverse environmental conditions including increasing water temperatures over the last 15 years combined with continued fishing mortality.



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.

Declines in in the offshore portion of the fishery were evident as well though not as severe. However, the offshore portion of the SNE stock likely depends on nearshore larval settlement and offshore migration as the source of recruits (e.g., young of the year lobsters). Therefore, the offshore component is expected to see eventual declines as well.

The Draft Addendum will include a suite of management options aimed to increase egg production from zero to 60%. In its discussion of the stock, the Board agreed the addendum is an initial response to the 2015 stock assessment and stock status will continue to be reviewed. The Draft Addendum will be presented for Board review and possible approval for public comment at the Commission's Annual Meeting in late October. For more information, please contact Megan Ware, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [mware@asmfc.org](mailto:mware@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

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