



# ***Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission***

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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*Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **ASMFC Atlantic Menhaden Board Approves Draft Addendum I for Public Comment to Consider Commercial Allocations, Episodic Event Set Asides, and Incidental Catch/Small-Scale Fisheries *Stock Assessment Update Finds Resource is Not Overfished or Experiencing Overfishing***

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Atlantic Menhaden Management Board approved Draft Addendum I to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden for public comment. The Draft Addendum considers potential changes to Amendment 3 provisions for commercial allocations, the episodic event set aside (EESA) program, and the incidental catch and small-scale fisheries (IC/SSF) provision.

The Board initiated Draft Addendum I in August 2021 in response to the recommendations of a Board work group charged with evaluating provisions of the current management program and providing strategies to refine those provisions. Since Amendment 3 was adopted in 2017, the EESA and IC/SSF provisions have been impacted by recent trends in landings. The impacts have been most notable in New England, which has seen an increase in abundance of menhaden and demand for bait in recent years. New England states rely on the EESA to keep their commercial fisheries open while working to secure quota transfers. In addition the increases have led to a rise in landings under the IC/SSF provision once commercial quotas have been met. The options in the Draft Addendum aim to align state quotas with recent landings and resource availability while maintaining access to the resource for all states, reduce dependence on quota transfers, and minimize regulatory discards.

The Draft Addendum’s proposed options consider changes to the baseline quota of 0.5% and the time series that apportions the remaining quota to each jurisdiction, which is currently historic landings from 2009 to 2011. Furthermore, options within the Draft Addendum consider giving the Board the ability to change the proportion of the EESA from 1% up to 5%, with the option to make the potential change static with the approval of the Draft Addendum or dynamic such that the Board can reset it

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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.

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during the specification process. The Draft Addendum proposes a number of options to modify the IC/SSF provision in four major categories: the timing of the provision, permitted gear types, trip limits for permitted gear types, and catch accounting for the provision.

The Draft Addendum will be posted to the website next week at <http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>. A subsequent press release will provide the details on the public hearing schedule and how to submit written comments. The Board will meet to review submitted comment and consider final action on the addendum in November at the Commission's Annual Meeting in New Jersey.

### **Stock Assessment Update**

The Board also reviewed the results of the 2022 Atlantic Menhaden Stock Assessment Update, which indicates the resource is not overfished nor experiencing overfishing relative to the current ecological reference points (ERPs). In 2021, population fecundity, a measure of reproductive capacity, is above both the ERP threshold and target and total fishing mortality is below both the ERP threshold and target. The stock assessment update extended the 2019 Atlantic Menhaden Single-Species Benchmark Stock Assessment model with additional years of data from 2018-2021 and made some changes to the model structure. Work is also underway for an Atlantic Menhaden-specific ERP Benchmark Assessment, which is scheduled for completion in 2025.

The Assessment Update, as well as an overview to that update, will be posted to the Commission's website by mid-August at <http://www.asmfc.org/species/atlantic-menhaden> under Stock Assessment Reports. For more information, please contact James Boyle, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [jboyle@asmfc.org](mailto:jboyle@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

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