



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 4, 2025

PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
703.842.0749

American Lobster Board Initiates Draft Addendum XXXII to Repeal Gauge and Escape Vent Measures of Addendum XXVII

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s American Lobster Management Board initiated Draft Addendum XXXII to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. The Addendum will consider repealing all Addendum XXVII measures pertaining to gauge and escape vent size limits. This action responds to fervent industry concerns about the potential economic impacts of an increase to the minimum gauge size in the Gulf of Maine and uncertainty with trade issues with Canada.

“Rolling back the resiliency measures in Addendum XXVII results in increased risk to the long-term viability of the lobster fishery,” states Board Chair Patrick Keliher of Maine. “This action being considered by the Board will require the Gulf of Maine lobster industry to develop management strategies to ensure the long-term health of the resource and the coastal communities that it supports.” The Gulf of Maine states also reiterated their commitment to the sustainability of the lobster fishery and working closely with the lobster industry to develop alternative conservation measures.

Addendum XXVII was approved with the goal of providing additional protection of the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank (GOM/GBK) spawning stock biomass through proactive conservation measures. Under Addendum XXVII, changes to the current gauge and escape vent sizes in Lobster Conservation Management Areas (LCMAs) 1, 3, and Outer Cape Cod were triggered based on observed declines in recruit abundance indices, with the original implementation date of June 1, 2024. In August 2024, the Board approved Addendum XXXI to push back the implementation date so that the series of changes to gauge and vent sizes would begin July 1, 2025. While the overall stock condition remains favorable, persistent declines in the juvenile lobster population, and now in landings, are cause for concern. Specifically, there has been a 40% decline in pre-recruits in the multiple ventless trap and trawl surveys and a 24% decline in lobster landings in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts since peak landings in 2016.

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.

1050 N. Highland Street • Suite 200A-N • Arlington, VA 22201
703.842.0740 (phone) www.asmf.org

The Draft Addendum will not consider repealing regulations prohibiting the issuance of 10% additional trap tags in Areas 3 and 1 above the trap limit or allocation, nor v-notch possession definitions established by Addendum XXVII. The Board will consider approval of Draft Addendum XXXII for public comment in March.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

###