



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*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 10, 2004

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ASMFC Horseshoe Crab Board Approves Addendum III *NJ, DE, and MD Further Reduce Landings*

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved Addendum III to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Horseshoe Crab. The Addendum seeks to further the conservation of horseshoe crab and migratory shorebird populations in and around the Delaware Bay. It reduces harvest, implements seasonal closures and revises the Plan’s monitoring requirements.

“Through its actions today, the Board continues to recognize the unique relationship between horseshoe crabs and migratory shorebird populations,” stated Board Chair Bruce Freeman of New Jersey. “I want to especially acknowledge the efforts of the States of New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland in taking steps to ensure the integrity of the Delaware Bay ecosystem.”

The Addendum responds to recommendations of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Shorebird Technical Committee to reduce horseshoe crab harvest in New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland. The intent is to increase the abundance of horseshoe crabs eggs to meet the energetic requirements of migratory shorebirds that stopover in Delaware Bay.

Specifically, the Addendum caps annual harvest in New Jersey and Delaware at 150,000 crabs/state and sets Maryland’s annual quota at its 2001 landings level (170,653 crabs). Further, it requires the three states to prohibit the harvest and landings of horseshoe crab for bait from May 1 to June 7. Addendum III also encourages states with both bait and biomedical fisheries to allow biomedical companies to bleed harvested crabs prior to their use as bait. This would eliminate mortality associated with the process of bleeding and returning crabs to the waters from which they were harvested.

Copies of the Addendum will be available by mid-April and can be obtained from the Commission’s website at www.asmfc.org or by contacting the Commission office at (202) 289-6400. For more information, please contact Braddock Spear, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or bspear@asmfc.org.

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PR04-07

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.

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