



# *Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*

## NEWS RELEASE

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*Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations of all Atlantic coast fish species, or successful restoration  
well in progress by the year 2015*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **ASMFC Tautog Board Sets Required Harvest Reduction at 39%**

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Tautog Management Board has lowered the harvest reduction necessary for states to comply with Addendum VI. Under the revised stock assessment update, states from Connecticut through Virginia are required to reduce harvest by 39% from the average of 2008 and 2009 levels. This change responds to errors found in the 2011 assessment update, which overestimated the 2009 fishing mortality rate and, therefore, the associated harvest reduction necessary to achieve the fishing mortality target. Previously, states had been required to reduce harvest by 53%.

Approved in late 2011, Addendum VI lowers the fishing mortality target to 0.15 and requires states to implement measures to achieve this target. Additionally, it allows for reductions based on regional/state fishing mortality rates for states that can demonstrate a lower regional fishing mortality rate than the coastwide assessment. Massachusetts and Rhode Island submitted and received Board approval for a regional assessment which demonstrated a local fishing mortality rate below the Addendum VI target. Therefore, they will not need to make any harvest reductions. All other states are required to meet the 39% reduction in harvest and can employ a combination of bag limits, size limits and/or closed seasons based on approved methodologies to achieve the reductions. Management measures derived using alternative methodologies will need to be vetted through the Commission’s Tautog Technical Committee and approved by the Management Board before they can be implemented by the state(s). All states have the option of implementing more conservative management measures.

The revised assessment results show the stock continues to be overfished with overfishing occurring. The spawning stock biomass (SSB) has remained at low levels for the last decade, with 2009 SSB estimated at 10,663 metric tons — 38% of the target SSB (26,800 metric tons). Current coastwide fishing mortality (F) is estimated at 0.26, well above the Addendum VI target of  $F=0.15$ . At  $F=0.15$ , original projections estimated that SSB would exceed the SSB threshold (20,100 metric tons) around 2018. However, under the corrected assessment, the stock is not projected to reach the threshold by 2025. Based on these new findings, some Board members expressed concern that the current  $F_{\text{target}}$  is insufficient to rebuild the stock. The rebuilding strategy will be discussed at a future meeting.

For more information, please contact Christopher Vonderweidt, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [cvonderweidt@asmfc.org](mailto:cvonderweidt@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

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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 anadromous species.

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