



# *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 Approves Addendum VI to the Tautog FMP *States to End Overfishing***

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s Tautog Management Board (Board) approved Addendum VI to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Tautog in response to the latest scientific advice that the stock continues to be overfished with overfishing occurring. According to the 2011 stock assessment update, spawning stock biomass (SSB) has remained at low levels for the last decade, with 2009 SSB estimated at 10,553 metric tons — 39% of the target SSB (26,800 metric tons). Current coastwide fishing mortality (F) is estimated at 0.38, well above the management plan’s target of F=0.20. Overfishing has occurred since 2005. These findings and the remaining information contained in the 2011 assessment update were approved by the Board for management use.

In order to end overfishing and initiate stock rebuilding, Addendum VI lowers the F target to 0.15 and requires states to implement measures to achieve a 56% reduction in exploitation by January 1, 2012. The Technical Committee recommended implementing the F target at 0.15 or lower to stop overfishing and improve chances of rebuilding. Tautog’s slow growth rate, late maturity, and spawning behavior makes it particularly susceptible to overfishing and limits stock rebuilding. The Technical Committee advised that SSB will not increase under the current F (0.38) and will just reach the SSB threshold (20,100 metric tons) by 2025 under F = 0.15.

Addendum VI requires all states to prohibit the possession of undersized tautog in excess of bag and possession limits. The measure is intended to deter illegal harvest of tautog for the live market. The Board remains concerned about the illegal live harvest and will continue to work with the Commission’s Law Enforcement Committee on ways to reduce it. Based on the advice of the Law Enforcement Committee and submitted public comment, the Board did not implement the other measures contained in the public comment draft.

The Addendum can be obtained via the Commission’s website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at 703/842-0740. For more information, please contact Chris Vonderweidt at [cvonderweidt@asmfc.org](mailto:cvonderweidt@asmfc.org).

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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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