



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
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Board Approves Horseshoe Crab Addendum V *Addendum Maintains Current Management Program Through Fall 2009*

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s Horseshoe Crab Management Board approved Addendum V to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Horseshoe Crab. The Addendum maintains the suite of management measures contained in Addendum IV for an additional year. These measures seek to address the needs of the migratory shorebirds, particularly the red knot, while allowing a limited commercial bait fishery. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Shorebird Technical Committee has indicated that the red knot, one of many shorebird species that feed upon horseshoe crab eggs, remains stable at very low population levels. Red knots have shown no sign of recovery, despite a nearly 70 percent reduction in horseshoe crab landings since 1998.

With Addendum IV due to expire on September 30, 2008, the Board initiated development of Addendum V to continue horseshoe crab management in Delaware Bay for another year. Based on the most recent surveys of horseshoe crabs, management measures in Addendum IV and previous management plans are resulting in increased horseshoe crab abundance in the Delaware Bay region. A horseshoe crab trawl survey administered by Virginia Tech shows increases in both immature and mature males and females over the past four to five years. A survey of spawning crabs on the beaches of Delaware Bay indicate stable female spawning activity and increased male spawning over the past nine years.

The Addendum V essentially mirrors the management measures contained in Addendum IV. These include a delayed, male-only harvest in New Jersey and Delaware for one year. Specifically, it prohibits the harvest and landing of male and female horseshoe crabs from January 1 through June 7 in the Delaware Bay, and restricts the annual harvest to 100,000 males per state from June 8 through December 31. As with all Commission plans, states have the prerogative to implement more conservative management measures. In the case of New Jersey, it implemented a moratorium on the harvest and landing of horseshoe crab.

The Addendum also establishes a delayed harvest in Maryland, prohibiting horseshoe crab harvest and landings from January 1 through June 7 for one year. The Addendum further prohibits landing of horseshoe crabs in Virginia from federal waters from January 1 through June 7 for one year. No more than forty percent of Virginia’s quota may be landed from ocean waters and those landings must be comprised of a minimum male to female ratio of 2:1. The Addendum also contains an adaptive management provision that allows, through Board vote, the extension of these management measures an additional one-year period.

The Addendum will be available in September. Copies can be obtained by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400 or via the Commission’s website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News. For more information, please contact Braddock Spear, Senior Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator for Policy, at (202) 289-6400 or bspear@asmfc.org.

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.