



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
May 23, 2013

PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
703.842.0740

ASMFC American Lobster Board Approves Addendum XX and Releases Draft Addenda XXI for Public Comment

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s American Lobster Management Board approved Addendum XX to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster. The Addendum formalizes measures outlined in an agreement between the offshore lobster fishery and groundfish sector trawl fishermen for bottom sharing in Closed Area II of Georges Bank in order to prevent gear conflicts and to protect large concentrations of egg bearing females.

The agreement specifies certain times of year when lobster trap gear and sector trawl fishermen may fish in (or not fish in) certain portions of Closed Area II. The fishing industry developed this agreement in anticipation of the final approval of the New England Fishery Management Council’s (NEFMC) Groundfish Framework 48 which contains measures to help mitigate the economic impact of the dramatic reductions in groundfish annual catch limits for the 2013 fishing year which began on May 1, 2013. NOAA Fisheries has published an interim rule allowing for groundfish sectors to request, through their operations plans, access to areas currently closed solely to reduce fishing mortality. NEFMC explicitly considered the potential for gear conflicts and included language in the Framework that states “when considering sector requests for access to closed areas, NMFS Regional Office should include, inter alia, consideration of the potential for gear conflicts, shifts in fishing effort out of the closed areas and impacts on protected species and lobsters.”

The Board also approved Draft Addendum XXI for public comment. The Draft Addendum proposes changes to the transferability program for Lobster Conservation Management Areas (LCMAs) 2 and 3. These changes are designed to allow for flexibility in the movement of traps as the consolidation program for LCMAs 2 and 3 occur to address latent effort (unfished allocation) are implemented. The proposed measures are also intended to provide a mechanism for industry to maintain a profitable fishery as trap reductions occur.

The Draft Addendum is the second in a series of addenda that respond to the depleted condition of the Southern New England (SNE) lobster resource by scaling the capacity of the SNE fishery to the size the SNE resource. Since the scope of the SNE resource encompasses all or part of six of the seven LCMAs established by Amendment 3, additional addenda will be developed to address effort reductions in the remaining LCMAs (4, 5, and 6).

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.

Addendum XX and Draft Addendum XXI will be available on the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) under *Breaking News* or by contacting the Commission at 703.842.0740. It is anticipated that the states will be conducting public hearings on Draft Addendum XXI; a subsequent press release will be released once the hearing schedule has been finalized. For more information, please contact Kate Taylor, Senior FMP Coordinator, at ktaylor@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

###