



# *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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### **ASMFC American Eel Board Approves Addendum III and Initiates Draft Addendum IV**

Alexandria, VA – The Commission’s American Eel Management Board approved Addendum III to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Eel and initiated development of Draft Addendum IV. Given the scope of issues addressed in Draft Addendum III and the wide range of input received through public comment, the Board decided to divide the issues between the two addenda, with Draft Addendum IV primarily focusing on management measures for the glass eel fishery.

Addendum III establishes a 9” minimum size limit for recreational and commercial yellow eel fisheries, trip-level reporting for the commercial yellow eel fishery, a seasonal closure of silver eel fisheries, a 25 recreational fish per day creel limit, and measures to restrict the development of fisheries on pigmented eels. It also calls for the implementation of state-specific monitoring programs and provides recommendations for habitat improvements. States will be required to implement the Addendum’s measures by January 1, 2014.

Draft Addendum IV will propose a suite of options to address the glass eel fishery. These include, but are not limited to, the allowance of glass eel fisheries in states where harvest is currently prohibited, a coastwide quota, monitoring requirements, enforcement measures and associated penalties, quota transferability, and timely reporting. The Draft Addendum will also include options for managing New York’s Delaware River silver eel weir fishery. The Board will review and consider approval of Draft Addendum IV for public comment in October at the Commission’s Annual Meeting. If approved, Draft Addendum IV will be released for public comment during late fall/early winter, with possible Board final action in February 2014 and the implementation of management measures in 2014.

The Board’s actions respond to the findings of the 2012 benchmark stock assessment indicating the American eel population in U.S. waters is depleted. The stock has declined in recent decades and the prevalence of significant downward trends in multiple surveys across the coast is cause for concern. Causes of decline are likely due to a combination of historical overfishing, habitat loss, food web alterations, predation, turbine mortality, environmental changes, toxins and contaminants, and disease.

Commercial regulations vary by state. Glass eel fisheries currently occur in Maine and South Carolina. Significant yellow eel fisheries occur in New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, the Potomac River, Virginia,

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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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and North Carolina. Although commercial fishery landings and effort in recent times have declined in most regions, current levels of fishing effort may still be too high given the depleted nature of the stock. Given the current status of the fishery and resource, the Board approved Addendum III in order to reduce overall mortality of American eel, and will consider further conservation measures in Draft Addendum IV.

Addendum III will be available on the Commission website ([www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org)) under *Breaking News* or by contacting the Commission at 703.842.0740. For more information, please contact Kate Taylor, Senior FMP Coordinator, at [ktaylor@asmfc.org](mailto:ktaylor@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

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