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Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 30, 2019

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ASMFC Atlantic Herring Board Approves Addendum II Addendum Increases Protection of Spawning Herring in the Inshore Gulf of Maine

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Atlantic Herring Management Board approved Addendum II to Amendment 3 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Herring. The Addendum strengthens spawning protections in Area 1A (inshore Gulf of Maine) by initiating a closure when a lower percentage of the population is spawning (from approximately 25% to 20%), and extending the closure for a longer time (from four to six weeks). The Addendum also modifies the trigger level necessary to reclose the fishery, with the fishery reclosing when 20% or more of the sampled herring are mature but have not yet spawned. These changes to spawning protections are in response to the results of the 2018 Benchmark Stock Assessment which showed reduced levels of recruitment and spawning stock biomass over the past five years, with 2016 recruitment levels the lowest on record.

Under Amendment 3, the Board uses a series of closures to protect spawning aggregations in the Gulf of Maine. Biological samples are used to annually project the start of the spawning closures. Recent analysis by the Atlantic Herring Technical Committee found that while the spawning closure system was significantly improved under Amendment 3, the protocol could continue to be strengthened by considering when, and for how long, a closure is initiated. Specifically, the analysis showed greater protection could be provided by initiating a closure when a lower percentage of the population is spawning and extending the closure for a longer time.

The states are required to implement Addendum II’s measures by August 1, 2019. The Addendum will be available on the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) on the Atlantic Herring page by mid-May. For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at krootes-murdy@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 diadromous species.

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