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Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 6, 2019

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ASMFC Atlantic Herring Board Approves Draft Addendum II for Public Comment Draft Addendum Considers Measures to Protect Spawning Herring in Area 1A

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Atlantic Herring Management Board approved Draft Addendum II to Amendment 3 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Herring for public comment. The Draft Addendum proposes options to strengthen spawning protections in Area 1A (inshore Gulf of Maine). This action responds 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.

Currently, the Board uses a series of closures to protect spawning aggregations in the Gulf of Maine. These closures, which were implemented through Amendment 3, use biological samples to annually project the start of spawning. The closures are initially implemented for four weeks but can be extended by two additional weeks if samples indicate the continued presence of spawning herring. Recent analysis by the Atlantic Herring Technical Committee found that while the current 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, under the current protocol, spawning closures are initiated when there are approximately 25% spawners in the fishery; 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. As a result, Draft Addendum II considers extending the length of the spawning closures as well as altering the point at which closures are triggered in order to provide greater protection to the stock.

Interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. The Draft Addendum will be available on the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) under Public Input by February 20, 2019. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on April 3, 2019 and should be forwarded to Megan Ware, FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201; 703.842.0741 (fax) or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Atlantic Herring Draft Addendum II). It is anticipated some states will conduct public hearings on the Draft Addendum; the details of which will be released via a press release once they are finalized. For more information, please contact Megan Ware at mware@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740. PR19-03

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.