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Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 20, 2019

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703.842.0740

ME, NH & MA Schedule Hearings on Atlantic Herring Draft Addendum II ***Draft Addendum Considers Measures to Protect Spawning Herring in Inshore Gulf of Maine***

Arlington, VA – The States of Maine and New Hampshire, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts have scheduled their hearings to gather public input on Draft Addendum II to Amendment 3 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Herring. An additional hearing will also be conducted via webinar. The details of the hearings follow.

Maine Department of Marine Resources

March 6, 2019 at 5 PM
ME DMR Augusta Office
Room 118
32 Blossom Lane
Augusta, Maine
Contact: [Pat Keliher](#) at 207.624.6553

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

April 1, 2019 at 6 PM
MA DMF Gloucester Office
Annisquam River Station
30 Emerson Avenue
Gloucester, Massachusetts
Contact: [Cate O'Keefe](#) at 617.626.1512

New Hampshire Fish and Game

April 2, 2019 at 7 PM
Urban Forestry Center
45 Elwyn Road
Portsmouth, New Hampshire
Contact: [Doug Grout](#) at 603.868.1095

Webinar Hearing

March 26, 2019 at 6 PM
Webinar link –
<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/121211557>
For Audio, dial 1.888.585.9008 and
enter the passcode: 853-657-937
Contact: [Kirby Rootes-Murdy](#) at 703.842.0740

The Draft Addendum proposes options to strengthen spawning protections in Area 1A (inshore Gulf of Maine). The Draft Addendum responds to the results of the 2018 benchmark stock assessment, which show reduced levels of recruitment and spawning stock biomass over the past five years, with 2016 recruitment levels the lowest on record.

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.

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.

Fishermen and others interested in Atlantic herring management are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum by attending state public hearings, participating in the webinar hearing, or providing written comment. The Draft Addendum is available at http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/AtlHerringDraftAddendumII_PublicComment.pdf. It can also be obtained via the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) under Public Input. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM (EST) on April 4, 2019** and should be forwarded to Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201; 703.842.0741 (fax) or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Herring Draft Addendum II). For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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