



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
September 14, 2012

PRESS CONTACT: Tina Berger
703.842.0740

ASMFC Releases Atlantic Menhaden Draft Amendment 2 for Public Comment: *States to Conduct Hearings in October/November*

Arlington, VA – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission’s Atlantic Menhaden Management Board has released Draft Amendment 2 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden for public review and comment. The Draft Amendment presents a suite of options to manage and monitor the stock in both the short and long-term. These include options to end overfishing; change the biomass reference points to match the fishing mortality reference points; and establish a specification process to set and allocate total allowable catch (TAC), including procedures to close the fishery when a certain percentage of the TAC has been projected to be landed. It presents accountability measures to address quota transfers, rollovers, and overage payback, as well as options to allow for a specified amount of the TAC to be set aside for small scale fisheries and episodic events. To address monitoring and data collection needs, the Draft Amendment also presents options for timely quota monitoring and the collection of biological data through catch sampling.

The Draft Amendment responds to the findings of both the 2010 benchmark stock assessment and the 2012 stock assessment update that indicate the stock is experiencing overfishing but may or may not be overfished depending on the reference points chosen. The stock is not overfished based on the current reference points used in the most recent assessment. Given that the stock is experiencing overfishing, the Draft Amendment’s immediate goals are to take steps to end overfishing and manage Atlantic menhaden not only as a fishery but as a critical ecosystem component. However, uncertainties in the 2012 stock assessment update make it difficult to quantify the level of reductions needed to meet those goals. Therefore, the Draft Amendment includes a range of harvest reductions from 0 – 50% from current harvest levels. The broad range of potential harvest reductions and allocation scenarios enables the Board and the public to consider management options beyond the historical allocations and traditional quota setting approaches to best manage this fishery. The Technical Committee plans to address the issues with the stock assessment in the next benchmark assessment, currently planned for 2015.

It is anticipated that the majority of Atlantic coastal states will be conducting hearings on the Draft Amendment. A subsequent press release will announce the details of those hearings. Final action on the Amendment is anticipated to occur in December; information on that meeting will be announced once it has been finalized. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Amendment either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. Draft Amendment 2 is available on the Commission website

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.

<http://www.asmfc.org/speciesDocuments/menhaden/fmps/atlMenhadenAmendment2forPublicComment.pdf> under *Breaking News* or by contacting the Commission at 703.842.0740. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM (EST) on November 16, 2012** and should be forwarded to Mike Waine, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or mwaine@asmfc.org (Subject line: Draft Amendment 2). For more information, please contact Mike Waine at mwaine@asmfc.org.