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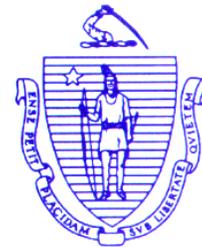
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December 4, 2012

Marine Fisheries Advisory

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENT: 2012-2013 NORTHERN SHRIMP ANNUAL SPECIFICATIONS

On December 3, 2012, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Northern Shrimp Section (Section), including delegations from the states of Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts, met in Portland, ME to set the annual specifications for the 2012-2013 commercial northern shrimp season. The Section established the following annual specifications:

- The 2012-2013 commercial fishery is limited by a 625 mt total allowable catch (TAC);
- The trawl fishery has been allocated 539.02 mt of the TAC and is set to open on Tuesday, January 22, 2013 with two landing days (Monday and Wednesday) and no trip limits. The trawl fishery will close when it is determined that 85% of its annual TAC has been landed;
- The trap fishery has been allocated 80.54 mt of the TAC and will open on Tuesday, February 5, 2013 with six landing days (Monday – Saturday) and an 800 lb trip limit. The trap fishery will close when it is determined that 85% of its annual TAC has been landed; and
- The remaining 5.44 mt of the TAC has been set aside for research.

Pursuant to 322 CMR 5.04(2), the Division of Marine Fisheries will accept written comments on the above bulleted annual specifications through 5:00 PM on December 19, 2012. Written comments can be received by e-mail (jared.silva@state.ma.us), fax (617-626-1509) or mail (DMF; 251 Causeway Street, Suite 400; Boston, MA 02114).

Following this comment period, the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission will complete an electronic voting poll by December 27, 2012. Unless otherwise notified, the Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries will, by declaration, establish the above 2012-2013 commercial northern shrimp annual specifications effective January 22, 2013.

The 2012-2013 TAC represents a 72% decrease from the 2011-2012 TAC. The Section considered several factors when setting this specification: 1) The northern shrimp stock is overfished and overfishing has been occurring in each of the last three fishing seasons; 2) Biomass has been in steady decline since 2007 and it is currently at a historic low; and 3) 2010 and 2011 recruitment was poor – a product of both a low biomass and warming ocean temperatures.

For further information please contact Jared Silva (jared.silva@state.ma.us or 617-626-1534).

Visit our website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.