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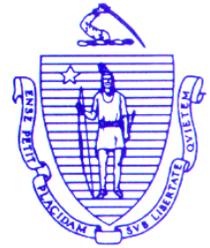
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March 1, 2016

Marine Fisheries Advisory

ASMFC Public Hearings on Jonah Crab Management: March 14 & 15

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) is seeking public comment on Draft Addendum I to the Jonah Crab Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The Draft Addendum addresses incidental bycatch limits for Jonah crab. The full schedule of public hearings (Maine through Maryland) is available via the ASMFC [website](#). The details for two hearings in Massachusetts are as follows:

Monday, March 14, 2016 at 5:30 PM

New Bedford Fairfield Inn and Suites
185 McArthur Drive
New Bedford, Massachusetts

Tuesday, March 15, 2016 at 6:00 PM

MA DMF Annisquam River Field Station
30 Emerson Avenue
Gloucester, Massachusetts

Draft Addendum I proposes changes to the incidental bycatch limits for non-trap gear (e.g., otter trawls, gillnets) and non-lobster trap gear (e.g., fish, crab, and whelk pots). For non-trap gear, the Draft Addendum includes options to maintain, increase, or eliminate the bycatch limit, while options for non-lobster traps include establishing bycatch limits of varying size or maintaining no limit on these gears. The intent of the Draft Addendum is to cap incidental landings of Jonah crab while ensuring the inclusion of current participants in the Jonah crab fishery. The FMP currently prescribes a 200 crab per calendar day/500 crab per trip incidental bycatch limit for non-trap gear; however, concerns were expressed over the appropriateness of these limits. Data submitted by the New England Fishery Management Council and NOAA Fisheries illustrate while 97-99% of trips from 2010 through 2014 were within the current limit, there were several trips above the limit. Furthermore, current bycatch landings were sufficiently low, accounting for approximately 0.1% of total landings.

Bycatch limits for non-lobster trap gear were added as a second issue for consideration in the Draft Addendum to address concerns regarding the lack of effort controls on non-lobster traps and the potential for trap proliferation. Data submitted by NOAA Fisheries show between May 1, 2013 and August 31, 2015, 194 trips landed Jonah crab with whelk pots, crab pots, and fish pots. Of these, 80 trips landed 100 crab or fewer and 115 trips landed 200 crab or fewer. Approximately 45 trips landed between 200 and 500 crab and 40 trips landed more than 450 crab. Landings from Maryland show between 2012 and 2015, 33 trips landed Jonah crab with fish pots. All of these trips were under 200 pounds. Reports also indicated from 2014–2015, 36 trips landed Jonah crab with whelk pots. Average landings per trip with whelk pots were under 500 pounds; however, there is concern that these whelk pot landings may in fact be rock crab, a closely related species which is often misreported as Jonah crab.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. The Draft Addendum can be obtained [here](#) or via the ASMFC website (www.asmfc.org), under *Public Input*. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM (EST) on April 18, 2016** and should be forwarded to Megan Ware, FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at mware@asmfc.org (Subject line: Draft Addendum I).

For more information, please contact Dan McKiernan, DMF Deputy Director, at (617) 626-1536 or dan.mckiernan@state.ma.us.

www.mass.gov/marinefisheries