



Paul J. Diodati
Director

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Division of Marine Fisheries
251 Causeway Street, Suite 400
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 626.1520
Fax (617) 626.1509



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Marine Fisheries Advisory

**COMMONWEALTH TO HOST ASMFC HEARING ON
DRAFT ADDENDUM VIII TO INTERSTATE LOBSTER PLAN -
MA Hearing on Wednesday, April 19th**

The Commonwealth will host an ASMFC hearing on Draft Addendum VIII to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American lobster. The hearing will start at 6PM on Wednesday, April 19th at the Holiday Inn in Dedham (55 Ariadne Rd., Dedham, MA). Please see the ASMFC press releases below and visit www.asmfc.org for further information.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
March 15, 2006

PRESS CONTACT:
Tina Berger (202) 289-6400

**American Lobster Board Approves Draft Addendum for Public Comment *Addendum Explores
Establishment of Biological Reference Points
and Enhanced Data Collection***

Washington, DC – The Commission’s American Lobster Management Board approved releasing Draft Addendum VIII to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for American Lobster for public comment. The Draft Addendum explores establishing new biological reference points based on recommendations from the 2006 stock assessment. It also investigates setting up a much needed consistent coastwide monitoring and reporting criteria for the lobster fishery. Insufficient data is the primary limitation on the ability to manage the fishery.

Atlantic coastal states from Maine through New York have scheduled their public meetings to gather comment on the Draft Addendum. The dates, times and locations of those meetings follow:

Maine Department of Marine Resources

April 10, 2006; 6:00-9:00 PM

Sheraton Hotel
383 Maine Mall Road
South Portland, Maine
Contact: Terry Stockwell at (207)633-9556

April 11, 2006; 6:00-9:00 PM

Trade Winds
2 Park Drive
Rockland, Maine
Contact: Terry Stockwell at (207)633-9556

April 12, 2006; 6:00-9:00 PM

University of Maine at Machias

Torrie Hall, Room 28
Machias, ME
Contact: Terry Stockwell at (207)633-9556

April 13, 2006; 6:00-9:00 PM
Ellsworth City Hall
1 City Hall Plaza
Ellsworth, Maine
Contact: Terry Stockwell at (207)633-9556

New Hampshire Fish and Game

April 6, 2006; 6:00 PM
Urban Forestry Center
45 Elwyn Road
Portsmouth, NH
Contact: John Nelson at (603)868-1096

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

April 19, 2006; 6:00 PM
Holiday Inn-Dedham
55 Ariadne Road
Dedham, MA 02026
Contact: Melanie Griffin at (617)626-1528

Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife

April 11, 2006; 6:00 PM
URI Narragansett Bay Campus
Corless Auditorium
South Ferry Road
Narragansett, Rhode Island
Contact: Jason McNamee at (401)423-1943

Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection

April 10, 2006; 7:00 PM
Marine Headquarters
333 Ferry Road
Old Lyme, Connecticut
Contact: Dave Simpson at (860)434-6043

New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation

March 30, 2006; 7:00 PM
205 North Belle Mead Road, Suite 1
East Setauket, New York
Contact: Gordon Colvin at (631)444-0433

Amendment 3 defines overfishing for the American lobster resource to occur when it [any stock] is harvested at a rate that results in egg production from the resource, on an egg-per-recruit basis, that is less than 10% of the level produced by an unfished population. Currently, F10 is used as the biological reference point to determine the status of the health of the lobster stock, coinciding with the egg-rebuilding schedule (complete in 2008). The recent lobster stock assessment raised two concerns in using F10 for the overfishing definition. First, it does not distinguish between a depleted stock (at low abundance) and a stock where overfishing is occurring. Second it requires the assumption of stability in the population for a time period at least as long as the animal's fishable lifespan. Based on these technical concerns, a new set of robust biological reference points is proposed. Addendum VIII proposes using abundance and fishing mortality thresholds and targets to determine the status of the health of the lobster stock. These targets minimize the chances that a stock will be incorrectly characterized based on the variability of the data.

Currently states are only required to maintain their reporting and data collection program as established in December of 1997. For most states, there are no reporting and data requirements. Accurate and comparable landings are the principal data needed to assess the impact of fishing on lobster populations. Two peer review panels indicated the data available are woefully inadequate for lobster management. The addendum presents multiple options to establish varying degrees of reporting and data collection requirements.

The Board will meet in May to review public comment on the Draft Addendum and consider its final approval. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Addendum either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies of the Draft Addendum can be obtained via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM on April 21, 2006** and should be forwarded to Toni Kerns, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at 1444 'Eye' Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202)289-6051 (fax) or tkerns@asmfc.org. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns at (202)289-6400 or tkerns@asmfc.org.

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