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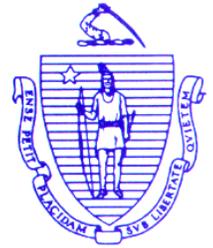
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May 20, 2016

Marine Fisheries Advisory

Public Comment Sought: Atlantic Menhaden Interstate FMP

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) is seeking public comment on Draft Addendum I to Amendment 2 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Menhaden. The Draft Addendum addresses the FMP's 6,000-pound/vessel/day bycatch limit. *Marine Fisheries* opted to not have a hearing in Massachusetts due to expected low impacts of the management options here, but is encouraging the submission of any comment in writing to ASMFC.

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 July 11, 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).

Specifically, the Draft Addendum considers an exemption to allow two licensed individuals to harvest up to 12,000 pounds of menhaden bycatch when working from the same vessel fishing stationary, multi-species gear (limited to one vessel trip per day). The various management options differ in which gears would fall under the exemption. Bycatch represents less than 2% of the total coastwide landings.

The practice of two permitted fishermen working together from the same vessel to harvest Atlantic menhaden primarily occurs in the Chesapeake Bay pound net fishery. This practice enables the fishermen to pool resources for fuel and crew. However, the practice is currently constrained by the FMP's bycatch allowance provision once the directed fishery has closed. The Draft Addendum seeks comment on whether the provision should be revised to accommodate the interests of fixed-gear fishermen who work together, as authorized by the states and jurisdictions in which they fish.

The intent of Draft Addendum I is to add flexibility to one element of the bycatch allowance provision while the Board prepares to address menhaden management more comprehensively through the development of Draft Amendment 3 to the FMP over the next two years.

For more information on menhaden management in Massachusetts, please contact Nichola Meserve at (617) 626-1531 or nichola.meserve@state.ma.us.

www.mass.gov/marinefisheries