



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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December 2, 2024

Marine Fisheries Advisory

ASMFC Public Hearings on Spiny Dogfish Draft Addendum VII

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission is seeking public comment on Draft Addendum VII to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Spiny Dogfish, which considers potential measures to maintain consistency with the federal Fishery Management Plan in response to the proposed rule to implement Spiny Dogfish Framework Adjustment 6. Implementation of Framework Adjustment 6 would establish area-based gear requirements for vessels fishing in the federal spiny dogfish fishery with gillnets in order to reduce bycatch of Atlantic sturgeon in this fishery.

Two virtual public hearings have been scheduled for New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia stakeholders upon request of those states (which are adjacent to the areas proposed for additional management), along with a third virtual public hearing for stakeholders coastwide. However, stakeholders from any state are welcome to participate in any of the virtual hearings. The public hearing details follow. The webinar registration link is [HERE](#), and additional webinar instructions are below.

| Date and Hearing Format | State/Agency | Contact |
|---|---|--|
| Wednesday, December 11 Webinar Hearing 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. | All Participating States (ME – FL) | James Boyle (ASMFC) 703.842.0740 |
| Tuesday, December 17 Webinar Hearing 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. | New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection | Joe Cimino (VA) 609.748.2063 |
| Wednesday, December 18 Webinar Hearing 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. | Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources & Virginia Marine Resources Commission | Mike Luisi (MD) 443.758.6547 Pat Geer (VA) 757.247.2236 |

The Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils developed Spiny Dogfish Framework Adjustment 6 in response to a 2021 Biological Opinion and 2022 Action Plan that called for reducing bycatch of Atlantic sturgeon in spiny dogfish gillnet fisheries. The coastwide Atlantic sturgeon population is made up of five distinct population segments, all of which are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act, and Atlantic sturgeon harvest has been under a coastwide moratorium in federal and state waters since 1998. The Commission's Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Sturgeon maintains the moratorium through at least 2038, and while

the [2024 stock assessment update](#) showed signs of improvement, the stock remains depleted coastwide.

The Board initiated Draft Addendum VII in August 2024 after the Councils recommended measures to NOAA Fisheries to prohibit overnight soaks for federal spiny dogfish permit holders on gillnets with 5"-10" mesh in November and May for a certain area of state and federal waters off of New Jersey, as well as for gillnets of 5.25"-10" mesh in November through March in specified areas off of Maryland and Virginia. The options in the Draft Addendum aim to establish equivalent overnight soak restrictions for spiny dogfish harvesters in state waters that do not possess a federal spiny dogfish permit.

Webinar Instructions

Please note that in order to comment during virtual webinar hearings you will need to use your computer or download the GoToWebinar app for your phone. Those joining by phone only will be limited to listening to the presentation and will not be able to provide input. In those cases, you can send your comments to staff via [email](#) or U.S. mail at any time during the public comment period. To attend the webinar in listen only mode, dial +1 (631) 992-3221 and enter access code 780-880-486.

To register for a virtual public hearing webinar please click [HERE](#) and select the hearing(s) you plan to attend from the dropdown menu. Hearings will be held via GoToWebinar, and you can join the webinar from your computer, tablet or smartphone. If you are new to GoToWebinar, you can download the software by ([clicking here](#)) or via the App store under GoToWebinar. We recommend you register for the hearing well in advance of the hearing since GoToWebinar will provide you with a link to test your device's compatibility with the webinar. If you find your device is not compatible, please contact the Commission at info@asmfc.org (subject line: GoToWebinar help) and we will try to get you connected. We also strongly encourage participants to **use the computer voice over internet protocol (VoIP)** so you can ask questions and provide input at the hearing. If you are joining the webinar but will not be using VoIP, you can also call in at +1 (631) 992-3221, access code 780-880-486. An audio PIN will be provided to you after joining the webinar.

For those who cannot attend any of the virtual hearings, the Commission will also post a recording of the hearing presentation on the [Commission's YouTube page](#) so that stakeholders may watch the presentation and submit comment at any time during the comment process. This recording will be available mid-December at <http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>.

Submitting Comments

The Draft Addendum is available at https://asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/SpinyDogfishDraftAddendumVII_PublicComment_Oct2024.pdf or via the Commission's website at <http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>. All those interested in the management of spiny dogfish are encouraged to provide input either by participating in a virtual public hearing or providing written comment. Public comment will be accepted until **11:59 PM (EST) on January 3, 2025** and should be sent to James Boyle, FMP Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201 or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Spiny Dogfish Draft Addendum VII).