



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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September 9, 2024

Marine Fisheries Advisory

ASMFC Public Hearing on American Lobster Draft Addendum XXXI *Postponing Implementation of Addendum XXVII Biological Management Measures*

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) is seeking public comment on Draft Addendum XXXI to Amendment 3 of the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for American Lobster. The Draft Addendum considers postponing the implementation of Addendum XXVII gauge and escape vent size changes to July 1, 2025. One general hearing will be conducted via webinar and is open to all to participate. The public hearing details follow:

Date/Hearing Format	State/Agency	Contact
Monday, September 23 <i>Webinar Hearing</i> 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.	General Public Hearing Webinar <i>The webinar registration link is available here, and additional webinar instructions are below.</i>	Caitlin Starks 703.842.0740

Addendum XXVII was adopted in May 2023 and established a trigger mechanism to automatically implement management measures to provide additional protection of the Gulf of Maine/Georges Bank (GOM/GBK) spawning stock biomass. Changes to the current gauge and escape vent sizes in Lobster Conservation Management Areas (LCMAs) 1, 3, and Outer Cape Cod (OCC) were triggered based on observed changes in recruit abundance indices in October 2023 with the inclusion of 2022 survey data in the trigger index. The Board then extended the implementation date to begin the series of changes to gauge and vent size by January 1, 2025, starting with an increase to the minimum gauge size in LCMA 1 from 3 ¼" to 3 5/16" to coordinate with Canada regarding possible trade implications, and give the industry and gauge makers additional time to prepare for these changes.

Based on a meeting held between US and Canadian lobster fishery managers and industry members in June 2024, the Board determined that postponing implementation of Addendum XXVII's biological measures to July 1, 2025 would reduce negative impacts to the US and Canadian lobster industries in 2025 and allow Canada more time to consider implementing complementary management measures. Thus, Draft Addendum XXXI considers postponing the changes in minimum gauge size for LCMA 1 (inshore Gulf of Maine), and the measures under Section 3.1 of Addendum XXVII to create a common size limit for state-only and federal permit holders fishing in OCC to July 1, 2025. The Draft Addendum does not consider postponing regulations prohibiting the issuance of 10% additional trap tags in Areas 1 and 3 above the trap limit or allocation.

(continued)

Webinar Instructions

Please note that in order to comment during the virtual webinar hearing 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 213.929.4212 and enter access code 878-390-871. ***All are welcome to participate in the virtual hearing.***

For the virtual hearing, please click [HERE](#) and register for the Draft Addendum XXXI public hearing webinar. The hearing 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.

Submitting Comments

The public is encouraged to submit comments at any time during the addendum process. The Draft Addendum is available at https://asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/AmLobsterDraftAddendumXXXI_PublicComment_Sept2024.pdf or via the Commission's website at <http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>. Public comment will be accepted until **11:59 PM (EST) on October 6, 2024** and should be sent to Caitlin Starks, Senior FMP Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201; or to comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Lobster Draft Addendum XXXI).