



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

251 Causeway Street, Suite 400, Boston, MA 02114
p: (617) 626-1520 | f: (617) 626-1509
www.mass.gov/marinefisheries



CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO
Lt. Governor

KATHLEEN A. THEOHARIDES
Secretary

RONALD S. AMIDON
Commissioner

DANIEL J. MCKIERNAN
Director

September 10, 2020
Marine Fisheries Advisory

ASMFC and MAFMC Public Hearings on Black Sea Bass Commercial Allocation Management

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) are seeking public comment on the Commission's Draft Addendum XXXIII and the Council's Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment. **The Massachusetts public hearing will be held remotely on Thursday, October 29, 2020 from 6-8 PM.** See below for additional information. The *DMF Contact* is [Nichola Meserve](#), 617-626-1531.

Overview of Proposed Action

[Draft Addendum XXXIII](#) proposes alternative approaches for allocating the coastwide black sea bass commercial quota among the states. The following options are proposed: A) status quo; B) increasing Connecticut's allocation to 5%; C) dynamic allocations partially based on regional stock distribution and partially on historic allocations; D) a trigger-based approach where only coastwide quota above a certain level would be distributed according to a different allocation scheme; E) another trigger-based approach where quota above the trigger would first be used to increase Connecticut and New York's allocations to 5% and 9%, respectively; and F) distributing a percentage of coastwide quota using initial allocations and the remaining proportion differently. A variety of sub-options are included to set the scale and pace of the allocation changes. Several options incorporate information on regional stock biomass; therefore, options are also proposed to define regions.

The Draft Addendum and Council Amendment also propose options to consider changes to federal regulations and Council management of state allocations. These options address whether the state allocations should be added to the Council's FMP or remain only in the Commission's FMP, whether changes should be made to the regulations regarding paybacks of state quota overages if added to the Council's FMP, and whether to modify regulations regarding federal in-season closures.

Hearing Schedule

The Commission and Council have scheduled seven public hearings to gather public input on the Draft Addendum and Council Amendment. Members of the commercial fishing industry and other stakeholders are encouraged to provide input either by participating in the public hearing webinars or providing written comment. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all hearings will be conducted via webinar, with designated hearings for individual states and regions. You are encouraged to participate in the hearing for your state or region; however, all hearings are open to all individuals. **Please note that in order to comment during the hearings you will need to use GoToWebinar. If you call in without using GoToWebinar, you will be in listen only mode and will not be able to provide input.** Webinar registration links and call-in information are provided in the Webinar Instructions below.

Webinar Instructions

You can access GoToWebinar through your computer, tablet, or smartphone. If you are new to GoToWebinar, you can download the software ([click here](#)) or via the App store under GoToWebinar. We recommend you register for the hearing well in advance. 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 (VoIP)** so you can ask questions and provide input at the hearing. 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, mail, or fax at any time during the public comment period.

To register for a public hearing please click here: [Public Hearing Registration](#)

As part of the registration process, you must select the date and time of the hearing you wish to attend (see Table). To attend the webinar in listen only mode, you may dial this number: 562.247.8422; Access Code: 412-241-258. Please note that 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, mail, or fax at any time during the public comment period.

State/Region	Public Hearing Webinar Date and Time
Virginia	Thursday, 10/8/2020 6-8 pm
North Carolina	Tuesday, 10/13/2020 6-8 pm
Delaware and Maryland	Wednesday, 10/14/2020 6-8 pm
Connecticut and New York	Thursday, 10/15/2020 6-8 pm
New Jersey	Tuesday, 10/27/2020 6-8 pm
Rhode Island	Wednesday, 10/28/2020 6-8 pm
Massachusetts	Thursday, 10/29/2020 6-8 pm

Learn More

Draft Addendum XXXIII is available at http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/BSB_DraftAddendumXXXIII_PublicComment.pdf or via the Commission's website at <http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>. A recording of the hearing presentation will be posted on the Commission's YouTube channel in late September. A subsequent press release will announce the availability of the recording.

Submit Written Comments

In addition to providing comments at any of the scheduled hearings, written comments will be accepted until **11:59 PM (EST) on November 13, 2020** and should be sent to Caitlin Starks, FMP Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201; 703.842.0741 (fax) or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Black Sea Bass Addendum XXXIII). All comments will be made available to both the Commission and Council for consideration; duplicate comments do not need to be submitted to both bodies.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, ASMFC FMP Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.