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Marine Fisheries Advisory

ASMFC Striped Bass Public Hearings: September 2, 3 & 4

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries will host four Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) public hearings on Draft Addendum IV to Amendment 6 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Striped Bass. The details of the hearings are:

September 2 at 10 AM

Nantucket Community Room
4 Fairgrounds Road
Nantucket, Massachusetts

September 3 at 6 PM

MA DMF Annisquam River Station
30 Emerson Avenue
Gloucester, Massachusetts

September 2 at 6 PM

Massachusetts Maritime Academy
Admiral's Hall, 101 Academy Drive
Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts

September 4 at 6 PM

Viking Club
410 Quincy Avenue (Route 53)
Braintree, Massachusetts

Draft Addendum IV proposes new fishing mortality (F) reference points, as recommended by the 2013 benchmark stock assessment, and associated management measures to reduce F to a level at or below the proposed target within one or three years. It responds to results of the 2013 Atlantic striped bass benchmark assessment indicating F in 2012 was above the proposed F target, and female spawning stock biomass (SSB) has been steadily declining below the target since 2006. This means even though the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring, SSB is approaching its overfished threshold and stock projections show SSB will likely fall below the threshold in the coming years. In addition, a similar decline has been observed in total harvest. In response to these factors, the Draft Addendum proposes management options to reduce fishing mortality to the target level.

The Draft Addendum includes a suite of management options to reduce recreational and commercial harvest along the coast and in the Chesapeake Bay under three reduction timeframes. The timeframes include: (1) reducing F to its target in one year with a 25% reduction from 2013 harvest in 2015; (2) reducing F to its target within three years with a 17% reduction from 2013 harvest in 2015; and (3) reducing F to its target within three years with a 7% sequential reduction in harvest for three consecutive years starting in 2015. Specific options to be considered include bag, size, slot and trophy size limits for the recreational fishery and quota reductions for the commercial fishery.

Given the Albemarle Sound/Roanoke River (A/R) stock of striped bass contributes minimally to the coastwide complex when compared to the Chesapeake Bay, Delaware, and Hudson stocks,

Draft Addendum IV proposes it be managed by the State of North Carolina using stock-specific biological reference points. These stock-specific reference points, which have been approved by the Board, would result in a separate quota that is set to maintain F for the A/R stock at its target level. The Board tasked the Technical Committee with the continued development of Chesapeake Bay-specific reference points for future use.

For full details, refer to Draft Addendum IV, available via the ASMFC website at http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/StripedBassDraftAddendumIV_PublicComment.pdf. The ASMFC's Striped Bass Management Board will review and consider final approval of the Draft Addendum at the ASMFC Annual Meeting in October 2014.

Written public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on September 30, 2014 and should be forwarded to Mike Waine, ASMFC, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or mwaine@asmfc.org (Subject line: Draft Addendum IV).

For more information about the Draft Addendum, please contact Mike Waine at mwaine@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740. Questions about the Massachusetts hearings can be addressed to Jared Silva at jared.silva@state.ma.us or 617-626-1534.