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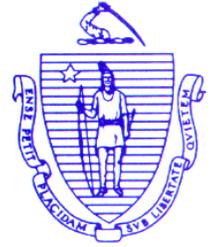
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March 26, 2013

Marine Fisheries Advisory

ASMFC PUBLIC HEARING ON AMERICAN EEL MANAGEMENT: APRIL 23

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries will host an Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) public hearing on Draft Addendum III to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Eel. The date, time, and location of the hearing are:

April 23, 2013; 6 PM

19 Sandwich Road

Bourne Public Library Meeting Room

Bourne, Massachusetts

The Draft Addendum proposes a wide range of management options with the goal of reducing mortality and increasing the conservation of American eel stocks across all life stages. Specific management options focus on both the commercial (glass, yellow, and silver eel life stages) and recreational American eel fisheries. The document also proposes increased monitoring by the states and recommendations to improve American eel habitat.

Draft Addendum III responds to the findings of the 2012 benchmark stock assessment indicating the American eel population in U.S. waters is depleted. The stock has declined in recent decades and the prevalence of significant downward trends in multiple surveys across the coast is cause for concern. Causes of decline are likely due to a combination of historical overfishing, habitat loss, food web alterations, predation, turbine mortality, environmental changes, toxins and contaminants, and disease.

Commercial regulations vary by state. Glass eel fisheries currently occur in Maine and South Carolina. Significant yellow eel fisheries occur in New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, the Potomac River, Virginia, and North Carolina. Although commercial fishery landings and effort in recent times have declined in most regions, current levels of fishing effort may still be too high given the depleted nature of the stock. States and jurisdictions are required to annually report on commercial harvest and monitor juvenile abundance. The recreational fishery is currently regulated by a 50 fish per day creel limit and a six inch size minimum, although recreational harvest is believed to be low.

For full details, refer to Draft Addendum III to Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Eel for Public Comment, available via the Commission's website at <http://www.asmfc.org/breakingNews.htm> or by contacting the Commission at 703.842.0740.

Written public comment will be accepted until **11:59 PM (EST) on May 2, 2013** and should be forwarded to Kate Taylor, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX); or comments@asmfc.org. For more information, please contact Kate Taylor at ktaylor@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740. Final action on the addendum is anticipated to occur in May.