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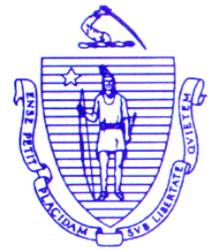
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June 12, 2017

Marine Fisheries Advisory

ASMFC Public Hearing on Tautog Management: June 21

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) is seeking public comment on Draft Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Tautog. The full schedule of public hearings is available [here](#). Massachusetts' hearing will be held:

Wednesday, June 21, 2017 at 6 p.m.
Massachusetts Maritime Academy
101 Academy Drive
Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts

The Draft Amendment proposes a fundamental change in tautog management, moving away from management on a coastwide basis towards regional management. In addition, Draft Amendment 1 proposes the establishment of a commercial harvest tagging program, as well as new goals and objectives, biological reference points and fishing mortality targets, and a stock rebuilding schedule.

Specifically, Draft Amendment 1 proposes delineating the stock into four regions (see Table 1) due to differences in biology and fishery characteristics, as well as limited coastwide movement.

Table 1. Four-Region Management Approach

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| 1) Massachusetts – Rhode Island |
| 2) Long Island Sound (CT and NY LIS) |
| 3) New Jersey – New York Bight |
| 4) Delaware – Maryland – Virginia |

Management options by region have been developed in response to the 2016 stock assessment update. Long Island Sound and New Jersey–New York Bight would be required to take harvest reductions due to the regional overfishing stock status, while Massachusetts–Rhode Island and Delaware–Maryland–Virginia would not have to take harvest reductions, but are proposing regional measures.

A commercial harvest tagging program is being proposed to address an illegal, unreported and undocumented fishery that has persisted for more than a decade. Reports of illegally harvested fish have been documented in cases against fishermen, fish houses, and at retail markets and restaurants. The tagging program, which would accommodate both the live and dead commercial markets, was recommended by the Commission's Law Enforcement Committee to increase accountability in the fishery and curb illegal harvest. A tautog tag trial was conducted to investigate the impact of the tags on the resource and found no mortality or degradation to fish health.

Stakeholders are encouraged to provide input on Draft Amendment 1 either by attending a public hearing or providing written comment. The Draft Amendment can be obtained [here](#) or via the Commission's website, www.asmfc.org, under *Public Input*. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM (EST) on July 14, 2017** and should be forwarded to Ashton Harp, ASMFC, 1050 N. Highland St, Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703-842-0741 (FAX) or at aharp@asmfc.org (Subject line: Tautog Draft Amendment 1).

Final action on the Amendment is scheduled to occur in August. For more information, please contact Ashton Harp, FMP Coordinator, at aharp@asmfc.org or 703-842-0740; or Jared Silva, DMF Regulatory Coordinator, at jared.silva@state.ma.us or 617-626-1534.