

ASMFC Public Hearings on Striped Bass Addendum 2: November 16 in Old Lyme and November 30 in Milford

A reminder that The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) has scheduled an in-person public hearing for Connecticut on **Thursday, November 16, 2023, from 6:00 – 8:00 PM** to gather public input on Draft Addendum 2 to Amendment 7 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Striped Bass. The public hearing will be held at CT DEEP Marine Headquarters, 333 Ferry Road, Old Lyme CT 06371 in the Boating Education Classroom (aka the “back building”). **CT DEEP has now scheduled an additional in-person hearing on Draft Addendum 2 on Thursday November 30, 2023, from 6:00 – 8:00 PM in Milford, CT. The hearing will be held at the Connecticut Audubon Society Coastal Center at Milford Point, 1 Milford Point Road, Milford, CT 06460.** The November 30th hearing in Milford will provide identical information as that presented at the November 16th hearing in Old Lyme and is intended to provide an additional opportunity for the public to comment on Draft Addendum 2.

Draft Addendum 2 contains regulation options for the management of recreational and commercial striped bass fisheries in 2024. The ASMFC Striped Bass Management Board (Board) declared the Atlantic striped bass stock overfished in 2018 and subsequently initiated a rebuilding plan to rebuild the stock to the spawning stock biomass (SSB) target specified in the FMP by 2029. In 2023, the Board took emergency action to reduce striped bass harvest via implementation of a 31” maximum size limit for harvest in all Atlantic striped bass recreational fisheries. The emergency action was motivated by updated stock assessment projections indicating a marked rise in striped bass fishing mortality in 2022 that substantially decreased the probability of achieving the stock rebuilding target in 2029 unless corrective action was taken. The 2023 emergency action resulted in a 28-31” harvest slot limit for Connecticut’s recreational striped bass fishery, which remains in effect.

During the same May 2023 meeting at which the Board took emergency action, the Board also initiated Draft Addendum 2 with the intent of formulating 2024 regulation options for commercial and recreational striped bass fisheries that in aggregate would keep the stock rebuilding plan on track. For the recreational fishery, the Draft Addendum proposes recreational bag and size limit options for the “ocean” (all recreational fisheries outside of Chesapeake Bay, including Connecticut) and Chesapeake Bay regions, including options with different limits for the for-hire sector. To address concerns about recreational filleting allowances and compliance with recreational size limits, the Draft Addendum includes an option that could establish minimum regulatory requirements for states that authorize at-sea/shore-side filleting of striped bass. For the commercial fishery, the Draft Addendum proposes a quota reduction option that would apply to all state’s commercial fisheries. The Draft Addendum also proposes an option that would enable the Board to respond to the results of stock assessment updates more quickly, via Board action, if a stock assessment indicates that the stock is not projected to rebuild by 2029.

Draft Addendum 2 can be viewed on the ASMFC website at:

https://asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/AtlStripedBassDraftAddendumII_PublicComment_Oct2023.pdf

Interested parties can also submit public comments on Draft Addendum 2 until 11:59 PM (EST) on December 22, 2023 via U.S. Mail by sending to: Emilie Franke, FMP Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland

St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201; or via e-mail by sending to: comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Striped Bass Draft Addendum II).

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