



**Conservation Update August 9, 2019**

**MENHADEN**

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission’s Atlantic Menhaden Management Board maintained the total allowable catch (TAC) of 216,000 metric tons (mt) for the 2020 fishing season with the option to revisit the 2020 TAC following review of the 2019 single-species and ecological reference point benchmark stock assessments and peer-review reports. The TAC will be made available to the states based on the state-by-state allocation established by Amendment 3 (see table below).

| 2020 ATLANTIC MENHADEN QUOTAS   |             |                |                    |
|---|-------------|----------------|--------------------|
|   |             | Metric Tons    | Pounds             |
| <b>TAC</b>  |             | 216,000        | 476,198,486        |
| <b>1% Set Aside*</b>  |             | 2,160          | 4,761,985          |
| <b>TAC After Set Aside</b>  |             | 213,840        | 471,436,501        |
| STATE   | ALLOCATION  | QUOTA (MT)     | QUOTA (LBS)        |
| ME  | 0.52%       | 1,106          | 2,437,866          |
| NH  | 0.50%       | 1,069          | 2,357,313          |
| MA  | 1.27%       | 2,725          | 6,008,565          |
| RI  | 0.52%       | 1,107          | 2,440,542          |
| CT  | 0.52%       | 1,103          | 2,431,491          |
| NY  | 0.69%       | 1,477          | 3,256,768          |
| NJ  | 10.87%      | 23,250         | 51,257,740         |
| PA  | 0.50%       | 1,069          | 2,357,183          |
| DE  | 0.51%       | 1,096          | 2,416,467          |
| MD  | 1.89%       | 4,038          | 8,901,558          |
| PRFC  | 1.07%       | 2,295          | 5,060,296          |
| VA  | 78.66%      | 168,213        | 370,846,528        |
| NC  | 0.96%       | 2,044          | 4,507,320          |
| SC  | 0.50%       | 1,069          | 2,357,183          |
| GA  | 0.50%       | 1,069          | 2,357,183          |
| FL  | 0.52%       | 1,108          | 2,442,500          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>100%</b> | <b>213,840</b> | <b>471,436,501</b> |
| *1% of the TAC is set aside for episodic events, the remaining TAC is allocated to the states per the provisions of Amendment 3. Quotas may be adjusted pending final 2019 landings and the redistribution of any relinquished quota. |             |                |                    |

The 2019 benchmark stock assessments are scheduled for peer review at the Southeast Data, Assessment and Review process (SEDAR 69) in early November. It is expected the benchmark assessments and peer-review reports will be available for Board review in February 2020. The



assessments will be used to evaluate the health of the stock and inform the management of the species in an ecological context. Should the Board determine a change in the quota is necessary after review of the assessments, a two-thirds vote would be required for reconsideration of the 2020 TAC.

### Cobia

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission approved Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Atlantic Migratory Group Cobia (Atlantic cobia). Amendment 1 establishes management measures that transition the FMP from complementary management with the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Councils to sole management by the Commission. Amendment 1 to the FMP was initiated in anticipation of the Councils' Regulatory Amendment 31 to the Coastal Migratory Pelagics (CMP) FMP, which was approved earlier this year and removed Atlantic cobia from the Councils' oversight.

Amendment 1 establishes a harvest specification process, which allows the Board to specify a limited set of management measures for up to 3 years. One of the measures that may be set through this process is a coastwide harvest quota. However, until the first specification process occurs, after completion of the ongoing stock in 2020, the current coastwide quota (670,000 pounds) remains in effect.

The Amendment also changes the units used to measure and evaluate the recreational fishery from pounds numbers of fish. To accommodate this change, the recreational harvest quota in pounds (620,000) is converted to numbers (22,142 fish) and allocated among the states, resulting in the following state recreational harvest targets:

- Virginia: 8,724 fish
- North Carolina: 8,436 fish
- South Carolina: 2,679 fish
- Georgia: 2,081 fish
- 1% *De Minimis* Set Aside: 222 fish

Moving forward, the Commission will recommend to NOAA Fisheries that fishing in federal waters be regulated according to the state of landing. If a vessel has licenses for multiple states with open seasons, they must follow the most restrictive license's regulations. If a vessel has licenses for multiple states, only one of which has an open season, they may fish under the regulations of the open state. Regulations resulting from this recommendation would only apply in federal waters. Fishermen would still be required to follow state possession or landing limits in state waters.

### **STRIPED BASS**

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Atlantic Striped Bass Management Board (Board) approved Draft Addendum VI for public comment. The Addendum was initiated in



response to the 2018 Benchmark Stock Assessment which indicates the resource is overfished and experiencing overfishing. The Draft Addendum explores a range of management alternatives designed to end overfishing and reduce fishing mortality to the target level in 2020.

The Draft Addendum proposes management options for both commercial and recreational sectors in the ocean and in Chesapeake Bay in order to **reduce total fishery removals by 18% relative to 2017 levels**. The proposed measures include reduced quotas for commercial fisheries, and changes in bag limits, minimum sizes, and slot size limits for the recreational sector. Since catch and release practices represent a significant component of overall fishing mortality, the Draft Addendum also **explores the mandatory use of circle hooks when fishing with bait** to reduce release mortality in recreational striped bass fisheries.

It is anticipated the majority of Atlantic coastal states will conduct public hearings on the Draft Addendum; a subsequent press release will announce the details of those hearings once they become finalized. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. The Draft Addendum will be available on the Commission website ([www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org)) under Public Input by August 19<sup>th</sup>. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on September 27, 2019 and should be forwarded to Max Appelman, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, [1050 N. Highland St](http://1050.N.HighlandSt), Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at [comments@asmfc.org](mailto:comments@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Draft Addendum VI). Organizations planning to release an action alert in response to Draft Addendum VI should contact Max Appelman at [mappelman@asmfc.org](mailto:mappelman@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

#### VMRC/FMAC agenda 8/26/2019

- A. Commercial Hook and Line minimum size for summer flounder: There has been a request to increase the minimum size in this fishery from 14 inches to 16.5 inches (same as the recreational fishery).
- B. Commercial Tautog Tagging: Amendment 1 of the ASMFC Tautog FMP requires implementing a commercial harvest tagging program to address illegal and unreported harvest. A presentation will be given on the proposed plan and procedures.
- C. Striped Bass Management – continued discussion. ASMFC approved Addendum VI for public comment. The Addendum provides a suite of management options designed to fishing mortality.
- D. Updates from Summer ASMFC Meeting (8/6-8) including cobia.



## JEB Little Creek update

Changes effective September 9, 2019:

The Inner and Outer harbors will become no-wake zones from the end of the jetties southward (see map below).



Normal conditions will remain the same: boaters seeking to access the inner harbor will have to contact the harbormaster on VHF-12 to seek permission to enter. During higher levels of force protection, boaters will need to contact the harbormaster to access the outer harbor (leaving and arriving).