



MID-ATLANTIC

FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

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Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission to Continue Development of Bluefish Allocation Amendment

Public Hearings to Occur After Release of Bluefish Operational Assessment

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) met jointly with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Bluefish Management Board (Board) on August 15 in Virginia Beach, VA to discuss the ongoing development of a Bluefish Allocation Amendment.

The Council and Board initiated the Bluefish Allocation Amendment in December 2017 to address several issues in the bluefish fishery, including goals and objectives for the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan (FMP), sector-based allocations, commercial allocations to the states, and the transfer processes. A series of scoping hearings were held earlier this year to gather public input on the scope of issues that could be considered in the amendment. During the joint meeting on August 15 the Council and Board reviewed this public input, discussed next steps for amendment development, and agreed on a number of issues that should be considered in the amendment.

Some members of the Council and Board expressed concern that the [recent release](#) of revised recreational catch and effort estimates from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) could have significant implications for the status and management of the bluefish fishery. It was suggested that amendment development should be halted until the completion of an assessment which incorporates these updated MRIP numbers. The next assessment for bluefish is expected to be available in the spring of 2019.

Although Council and Board members were generally in agreement that the amendment should incorporate the results of the operational assessment, some felt that postponing amendment development was unnecessary. Chris Moore, the Council's Executive Director, noted that several aspects of the amendment, such as FMP goals and objectives and a review of historical data, could be explored without the results of the new assessment.

After some debate, the Council and Board decided to continue to work on the amendment but agreed they will not finalize the public hearing document or hold public hearings until after the results of the bluefish operational assessment are available in the spring of 2019.

For additional information and updates on this amendment, please visit:
<http://www.mafmc.org/actions/bluefish-allocation-amendment>.