



NEWS RELEASE



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ASMFC and MAFMC Schedule Public Hearings on Draft Addendum XXXIII/Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) have scheduled a series of public hearings to gather public input on the Commission's Draft Addendum XXXIII and the Council's Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment. The Commission initiated the Draft Addendum in October 2019 to consider adjusting the commercial black sea bass allocations based on current distribution and abundance of the stock. In December 2019, the Council initiated an amendment, which will consider including the allocations in the Council fishery management plan (FMP), modifying the state-specific allocations, and other changes to federal regulations.

Overview of Proposed Action

The draft amendment and addendum propose alternative approaches for allocating the coastwide black sea bass commercial quota among the states. The following options are proposed: A) status quo; B) increasing Connecticut's allocation to 5%; C) dynamic allocations partially based on regional stock distribution and partially on historic allocations; D) a trigger-based approach where only coastwide quota above a certain level would be distributed according to a different allocation scheme; E) another trigger-based approach where quota above the trigger would first be used to increase Connecticut and New York's allocations to 5% and 9%, respectively; and F) distributing a percentage of coastwide quota using initial allocations and the remaining proportion differently. A variety of sub-options are included to set the scale and pace of the allocation changes. Several options incorporate information on regional stock biomass; therefore, options are also proposed to define regions.

This action also considers changes to federal regulations and Council management of state allocations. These options address whether the state allocations should be added to the Council's FMP or remain only in the Commission's FMP, whether changes should be made to the regulations regarding paybacks of state quota overages if added to the Council's FMP, and whether to modify regulations regarding federal in-season closures.

Hearing Schedule

The Commission and Council have scheduled seven public hearings to gather public input on the Draft Addendum and Council Amendment. Members of the commercial fishing industry and other stakeholders are encouraged to provide input either by participating in the public hearing webinars or providing written comment. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all hearings will be conducted via

Given black sea bass's presence in, and movement between, state waters (0-3 miles from shore) and federal waters (3- 200 miles from shore), the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council manage black sea bass cooperatively.

webinar, with designated hearings for individual states and regions. You are encouraged to participate in the hearing for your state or region; however, all hearings are open to all individuals. **Please note that in order to comment during the hearings you will need to use GoToWebinar. If you call in without using GoToWebinar, you will be in listen only mode and will not be able to provide input.** Webinar registration links and call-in information are provided in the Webinar Instructions below.

State/Region	Public Hearing Webinar Date and Time	Hearing Officer(s)	Contact Information
Virginia	Thursday, 10/8/2020 6-8 pm	Alexa Kretsch	alexa.kretsch@mrc.virginia.gov 757.247.2069
North Carolina	Tuesday, 10/13/2020 6-8 pm	Chris Batsavage	Chris.Batsavage@ncdenr.gov 252.241.2995
Delaware and Maryland	Wednesday, 10/14/2020 6-8 pm	DE: John Clark	John.Clark@delaware.gov 302.739.9914
		MD: Sonny Gwinn	sonnygwin@verizon.net 410.208.1149
Connecticut and New York	Thursday, 10/15/2020 6-8 pm	CT: Justin Davis	justin.davis@ct.gov 860.434.6043
		NY: Maureen Davidson	maureen.davidson@dec.ny.gov 631.444.0483
New Jersey	Tuesday, 10/27/2020 6-8 pm	Joseph Cimino	Joseph.Cimino@dep.nj.gov 609.748.2063
Rhode Island	Wednesday, 10/28/2020 6-8 pm	Corinne Truesdale	Corinne.truesdale@dem.ri.gov 401.423.1939
Massachusetts	Thursday, 10/29/2020 6-8 pm	Nichola Meserve	nichola.meserve@mass.gov 617.626.1531

Webinar Instructions

You can access GoToWebinar through your computer, tablet, or smartphone. If you are new to GoToWebinar, you can download the software ([click here](#)) or via the App store under GoToWebinar. We recommend you register for the hearing well in advance. GoToWebinar will provide you with a link to test your device's compatibility with the webinar. If you find your device is not compatible, please contact the Commission at info@asmfc.org (subject line: GoToWebinar help) and they will try to get you connected. We also strongly encourage participants to **use the computer voice over internet (VoIP)** so you can ask questions and provide input at the hearing. Those joining by phone only will be limited to listening to the presentation and will not be able to provide input. In those cases, you can send your comments to staff via email, mail, or fax at any time during the public comment period.

To register for a public hearing please click here: [Public Hearing Registration](#)

As part of the registration process, you must select the date and time of the hearing you wish to attend (see Table above). To attend the webinar in listen only mode, you may dial this number: 562.247.8422; Access Code: 412-241-258. Please note that those joining by phone only will be limited to listening to the presentation and will not be able to speak. In those cases, you can send your comments to staff via email, mail, or fax at any time during the public comment period.

Learn More

The public hearing document for the Council Amendment is available at https://www.mafmc.org/s/BSB_com_state_allocation_PHD.pdf. The Commission's Draft Addendum is available at <http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>. A recording of the hearing presentation will be posted on the Commission's YouTube channel in late September. A link to the recording will be posted at <https://www.mafmc.org/actions/bsb-commercial-allocation> when it is available.

Submit Written Comments

In addition to providing comments at any of the scheduled hearings, written comments will be accepted until **11:59 PM (EST) on November 13, 2020** and may be sent by any of the following methods:

1. **MAIL** to Caitlin Starks, FMP Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201
2. **FAX** to 703.842.0741
3. **EMAIL** to comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Black Sea Bass Addendum XXXIII)
4. **ONLINE** at <https://www.mafmc.org/comments/bsb-allocation>

All comments will be made available to both the Commission and Council for consideration; duplicate comments do not need to be submitted to both bodies.

For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, ASMFC FMP Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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