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*Marine Fisheries Advisory*

**Hearings on Future Interstate Lobster Plan Amendments, Area 2 Trap Transfer  
Reductions, and Area 2-specific V-notch Possession Rule  
Scheduled for September 25<sup>th</sup> (Gloucester) & 26<sup>th</sup> (New Bedford)**

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The Commonwealth will host hearings on behalf of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) regarding a Public Information Document (PID) for Draft Amendment 5 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American lobster and Draft Addendum IX to Amendment #3 regarding trap allocation transfers in Area 2 (southern New England). The Commonwealth also will accept comments on a recent emergency action to protect v-notched lobsters in Area 2.

**The PID will be addressed at both public hearings** and was developed by ASMFC to address several issues raised by the 2005 lobster stock assessment, peer review, and Lobster Board members to improve lobster management. These issues include (1) changes to the boundaries for the Lobster Conservation Management Areas; (2) uniform application of a V-notch definition and maximize size restrictions across all LCMAs; (3) more uniformity of minimum sizes across LCMAs; (4) restrictions on permits to control effort; (5) amending the non-trap sector daily allowances; and (6) adding a new objective to the management plan promoting more consistent regulations across all LCMAs. As the first step in the development of an amendment, the PID presents a broad overview of the issues facing American lobster resource, as well as a range of potential management measures affecting the stock and dependent fisheries. It provides the public with the opportunity to identify major issues and alternatives relative to the management of lobster.

**At the second hearing (in New Bedford) DMF will also accept comments on ASMFC's Draft Addendum IX (to Amendment #3) regarding Area 2 trap allocation transfers and a recent DMF Emergency action to protect V-notched lobsters in Area 2 (So. New England).** Draft Addendum IX proposes to establish a conservation tax (ranging from 0 to 25%) affecting fishermen who receive transferred permits or trap allocation under the Area 2 trap transfer program established by Addendum VII.

The recent DMF emergency action that required all commercial fishermen fishing or authorized to fish in Lobster Conservation Management Area 2 to comply with a new more conservative possession rule on v-notched lobsters. This new standard is "a notch or indentation in the base of the specific flipper that is at least as deep as 1/8 inch, with or

without setal hairs.” V-notching” is the practice of carving a v-shaped notch out of a designated flipper of a female egg-bearing lobster. The previous v-notch definition in LCMA 2 (1/4" straight-sided, etc.) only protected a female lobster before it molts. The newly implemented definition will protect female lobsters with healed or molted flipper. Legal sized female lobsters typically mate and extrude eggs after every molt. Protecting these lobsters through one or possibly two additional molts before they are subject to harvest would allow each female to extrude at least one additional clutch of eggs. Immediate action is necessary to protect those female lobsters that have recently hatched their brood of eggs and soon will be molting.

**Hearing Schedule:**

**ASMFC Hearing on PID for Amendment #5 only:** Monday, September 25th at 6 p.m. the Annisquam River Marine Fisheries Station (30 Emerson Ave., Gloucester, MA)

**ASMFC Hearing on PID for Amendment #5, ASMFC/DMF Hearing on Addendum IX, and DMF Hearing on emergency regulation on Area 2 v-notched lobster**

**protection:** Tuesday, September 26th at 6 p.m. at the New Bedford Whaling Museum (18 Johnny Cake Hill, New Bedford, MA). Comments on DMF Hearing on Addendum IX, and DMF Hearing on emergency regulation on Area 2 v-notched lobster protection received by e-mail ([marinefisheries@state.ma.us](mailto:marinefisheries@state.ma.us)), fax (617.626.1509), or mail (251 Causeway St., Suite 400; Boston, MA 02114) will be accepted until 5PM on Friday, September 29, 2006.

For further information on Draft Amendments and Addendums visit [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org). For further information on DMF draft regulations visit [www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries).

\*Please note the September 26th hearing in New Bedford starts at 6 p.m.