



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

## NEWS RELEASE

*Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### States Schedule Public Hearings on Horseshoe Crab Draft Addendum VIII

Arlington, VA – The Atlantic coastal states of New Jersey through Virginia have scheduled hearings to gather public input on Horseshoe Crab Draft Addendum VIII. Draft Addendum VIII considers adopting the changes to the Adaptive Resource Management (ARM) Framework recommended in the 2021 ARM Framework Revision and allowing its use in setting annual bait harvest specifications for Delaware Bay-origin horseshoe crabs. Some hearings will be conducted via webinar and some hearings will be conducted in person. Additional details on participating in the webinars can be found later in this release. The public hearing details are as follows:

Date and Hearing Format	State/Agency	Contact
<b>Wednesday, September 7</b> <b>Webinar Hearing</b> 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.	<b>New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection &amp;</b>	<a href="#">Joe Cimino</a> , 609.748.2063
<b>Thursday, September 8</b> <b>Webinar Hearing</b> 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.	<b>Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife</b>	<a href="#">John Clark</a> , 302.739.9108
<b>Wednesday, September 14</b> <b>Webinar Hearing</b> 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.	<b>Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources</b>	<a href="#">Michael Luisi</a> , 443.758.6547
<b>Thursday, September 15</b> <b>In Person Hearing</b> 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.	<b>Virginia Marine Resources Commission</b> Chincoteague Community Center 6155 Community Dr, Chincoteague, VA 23336	<a href="#">Ethan Simpson</a> , 757.247.2236

The Board initiated Draft Addendum VIII in January 2022, after it accepted the 2021 Revision of the ARM Framework and Peer Review Report for management use. The ARM Revision was endorsed by the independent peer review panel as the best and most current scientific information for the management of horseshoe crabs in the Delaware Bay Region, as it addresses previous peer review critiques, includes new sources of data, and adopts new modeling software to set harvest levels for Delaware Bay-origin horseshoe crabs that account for the forage needs of migratory shorebirds. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has evaluated the proposed changes to the management of horseshoe crabs under the ARM Revision to determine the likelihood of impacts to the red knot. The analysis indicates there is a less than one percent chance of a red knot population decline due to the implementation of potential female harvest under the ARM Revision. Based on this

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and diadromous species.

analysis, the Service concludes that take, defined under the Endangered Species Act as killing or injuring of red knots, is not likely. More information on the Service's analysis of the ARM Framework Revision is available at <https://www.fws.gov/media/us-fish-and-wildlife-service-evaluation-atlantic-states-marine-fisheries-commission-horseshoe>.

Horseshoe crabs in the Delaware Bay Region (New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia) have been managed under the ARM Framework to set harvest levels with consideration of the needs of migratory shorebirds since 2013. The ARM was developed jointly by the Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Geological Survey in recognition of the importance of horseshoe crab eggs to migratory shorebirds stopping over in the Delaware Bay region. In particular, horseshoe crab eggs are a critical food source for the rufa red knot, which is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The 2021 Revision includes improvements to the ARM Framework's population models for horseshoe crabs and red knots and incorporates more sources of horseshoe crab removal data, including mortality due to the biomedical industry and commercial discards from other fisheries.

Draft Addendum VIII includes two proposed options: no action, and an option to adopt the changes to the ARM Framework recommended in the 2021 Revision for use in setting annual bait harvest specifications for horseshoe crabs of Delaware Bay-origin. The changes proposed include using sex-specific harvest recommendations on a continuous scale rather than the previous discrete harvest packages, slight modifications to the adaptive management cycle, revised proportions of each state's harvest that is of Delaware Bay-origin, and the resulting state allocations. The maximum amount of male and female horseshoe crab harvest (210,000 females and 500,000 males), the general structure of how the ARM optimal harvest output is allocated among the four Delaware bay states, and the conceptual model of horseshoe crab abundance influencing red knot survival and reproduction remain the same in the ARM Revision, with the intent of ensuring the abundance of horseshoe crabs does not become a limiting factor in the population growth of red knots. If no action is taken, management measures would revert back to the provisions of Addendum VI.

A more detailed overview of the 2021 ARM Revision can be found [here](#). The final ARM Revision and Peer Review Report is available [here](#).

### **Webinar Instructions**

Please note that in order to comment during virtual webinar hearings you will need to use your computer or download the GoToWebinar app for your smart phone. Those joining by phone (audio 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](#), U.S. mail, or fax at any time during the public comment period. To attend the webinar in listen only mode, dial 213.929.4221 and enter access code 667-452-901.

To register for a virtual public hearing webinar please click [HERE](#) and select the hearing(s) you plan to attend from the dropdown menu. Hearings will be held via GoToWebinar, and you can join the webinar from your computer, tablet or smartphone. If you are new to GoToWebinar, you can download the software by ([clicking here](#)) or via the App store under GoToWebinar. We recommend you register for the hearing well in advance of the hearing since 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](mailto:info@asmfc.org) (subject line: GoToWebinar help) and we will try to get you connected. We also strongly encourage participants to **use the computer voice over internet protocol (VoIP)** so you can ask questions and provide input at the hearing. If you are joining the webinar but will not be using VoIP, you can may also call in at 213.929.4221, access code 667-452-901. An audio PIN will be provided to you after joining the webinar.

For those who cannot attend any in-person or virtual hearings, the Commission has posted a recording of the hearing presentation on the Commission's YouTube page so that stakeholders may watch the presentation and submit comment at any time during the comment process. This recording is available at <https://youtu.be/tSjn4mH7s4M>. Additional summary resources are available on the Commission's website at <http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>.

## Submitting Comments

The Draft Addendum is available at

[http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/62f2678cHSC\\_DraftAddendumVIII\\_PublicComment\\_Aug2022.pdf](http://www.asmfc.org/uploads/file/62f2678cHSC_DraftAddendumVIII_PublicComment_Aug2022.pdf) or via the Commission's website at

[http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/HSC\\_DraftAddendumVIII\\_PublicComment\\_Aug2022.pdf](http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/HSC_DraftAddendumVIII_PublicComment_Aug2022.pdf). All those interested in the management of horseshoe crab are encouraged to provide input either by participating in public hearings, which may be conducted via webinar, or providing written comment. Public comment will be accepted until **11:59 PM (EDT) on September 30** and should be sent to Caitlin Starks, Senior FMP Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201; or at [comments@asmfc.org](mailto:comments@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Horseshoe Crab Draft Addendum VIII).

Comments received during a public comment period on a proposed management action play an important role in the Commission's fisheries management process. All comments, whether they are individually submitted or as part of a larger, coordinated stakeholder response, are considered equally by a species management board when it determines final management action. When staff compiles all comments received, they use a categorization process to help the board effectively and efficiently navigate submitted public comment, whether it is 50 or 300,000 comments. Three or more comments that have the same language or state support for an organization's comments are considered form letters. However, if the commenter provides additional comments/rationale related to potential management action beyond the organization's or letter's comments, then it is considered an individual comment.

If your organization is planning to release an action alert in response to the Draft Addendum, please contact Caitlin Starks at [cstarks@asmfc.org](mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740, so she can work with you to develop a unique subject line to enable us to better organize and summarize incoming comments for Board review.

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