Atlantic Coastal States Schedule Public Hearings on Draft Addendum I to the Weakfish Plan: Public Comment Accepted until October 21, 2005

Washington, DC – The Commission’s Weakfish Management Board has approved sending forward Draft Addendum I to Amendment 4 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Weakfish for public review and comment. The Draft Addendum was developed in response to concern over declines in both weakfish abundance and commercial and recreational catches, and proposes reductions in recreational bag limits, commercial and recreational seasons, and bycatch allowances.

Atlantic coastal states from Rhode Island through Florida have scheduled the dates and times of their public hearings; their details follow.

**Rhode Island Dept. of Environmental Management**

*Tuesday, October 11, 2005; 6:00 PM*
University of Rhode Island  
Narragansett Bay Campus, Corless Auditorium  
South Ferry Road  
Narragansett, Rhode Island  
Contact: Brian Murphy at (401) 423-1941

**Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection**

*Tuesday, September 27, 2005; 7:00 PM*
Marine Headquarters, Boating Education Center  
333 Ferry Road  
Old Lyme, Connecticut  
Contact: David Simpson at (860) 434-6043

**New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation (Tentative location)**

*Wednesday, October 12, 2005; 7:00 – 10:00 PM*
Brookhaven Town Hall Auditorium  
1 Independence Hill  
Farmingville, New York  
Contact: Byron Young (631) 444-0436

**New Jersey Division Fish and Wildlife**

*Wednesday, October 12, 2005; 7:30 – 9:30 PM*
Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension  
355 Court House-South Dennis Road  
Route 657  
Cape May Court House, New Jersey  
Contact: Bruce Freeman at (609) 633-2408

*Thursday, October 13, 2005; 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM*
Ocean County Administration Building  
Room 119  
101 Hooper Avenue  
Toms River, New Jersey  
Contact: Bruce Freeman at (609) 633-2408

**Delaware Dept. of Natural Resources and Environmental Control**

*Tuesday, October 18, 2005; 7:00 PM*
Auditorium  
89 Kings Highway  
Dover, Delaware  
Contact: Roy Miller at (302) 739-9914
The Draft Addendum also addresses a major challenge in assessing the weakfish population, namely significant gaps in biological data such as age and length. It proposes new required levels of biological sampling intensity and considers the implications of state noncompliance. The Board will meet in early November to review public comment on the Draft Addendum and consider its final approval.

Copies of the Draft Addendum can be obtained via the Commission’s website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on Draft Amendment 1 either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Public comment will be accepted until **5 PM on October 21, 2005** and should be forwarded to Braddock Spear, Weakfish Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 1444 ‘Eye’ Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202)289-6051 (fax) or comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Weakfish). For more information, please contact Braddock Spear at (202)289-6400 or bspear@asmfc.org.

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