

Sydney Alhale

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

GIT Update:

In October 2017, at the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) annual meeting, the Tautog Management Board passed Amendment 1 to the Tautog FMP. The Amendment splits the east coast into 4 regional populations after the 2015 stock assessment revealed that tautog have high site fidelity and little coastwide movement. These regional populations will allow managers to develop targeted measures for localized management. The four regions include Mass/RI (MARI); Long Island Sound (LIS); NJ-NY Bight; and Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia (DELMARVA). The Delmarva intends to move towards regional recreational management measures, which includes a 16" size limit, 4 fish possession limit, and a Jan 1-May 15 and July 1-Dec 31 recreational season. VMRC requests public input and will be having a public hearing regarding the new regulations in the coming months. The final recreational regulations will be implemented in April 2018.

Amendment 1 also established a commercial harvest tagging program to address the illegal, unreported, and undocumented live fishery that has existed for more than a decade (mostly in the northern states). Commercially caught tautog will be required to be tagged by the harvester at the time of harvest or prior to offloading. The program will be implemented in 2019.