



State of New Jersey

MAIL CODE 501-03

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

NATURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

P.O. Box 420

Trenton, NJ 08625-0420

TEL. (609) 292-2965 FAX. (609) 984-1414

VISIT OUR WEBSITE WWW.NJFISHANDWILDLIFE.COM

CHRIS CHRISTIE

Governor

KIM GUADAGNO

Lt. Governor

BOB MARTIN

Commissioner

March 7, 2017

Dear New Jersey American Lobster Permit Holder; New Jersey Lobster/Fish/Conch Pot License Holder; Federal Lobster Dealer:

Public Hearing

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) approved the development of Draft Addendum XXV to Amendment 3 in August 2016. The draft addendum seeks to respond to the depleted condition of the Southern New England (SNE) American lobster stock, while still preserving a portion of the lobster fishery in the area. The overall goal of the addendum is to increase egg production and lower fishing mortality. The draft addendum is a result of the 2015 American lobster bench stock assessment that found the SNE stock severely depleted and undergoing recruitment failure. The addendum was approved in February 2017 for public comment. New Jersey will hold a public hearing on March 15, 2017, at the Belmar Municipal Court (see [attached News Release](#)). Fishermen and interested stakeholders are strongly encouraged to attend.

2017 Commercial Closures

The current federal measures for the 2017 fishing year remain unchanged from the previous year and are as follows:

In Area 4, effective January 1, 2017, a person fishing with any gear type in LCMA 4 or that has designated LCMA 4 on their Federal Fisheries or State Lobster Pot Permit shall not take or attempt to take, land, have in his or her possession, sell or offer to sell, any American lobster during the **closed season of April 30 through May 31, 2017**. This is the only closed period for LCMA 4. During the closed season, no dealer shall accept, have in their possession, buy, sell or offer to buy or sell American lobsters from LCMA 4. All traps must be removed from LCMA 4 before the start of seasonal closure. Lobster fishermen will have a grace period from May 24-May 31 to re-set gear within the closed area, however, traps may not be re-hauled until the season closure ends.

In Area 5, effective January 1, 2017, a person fishing with any gear type in LCMA 5 or that has designated LCMA 5 on their Federal Fisheries or State Lobster Pot Permit shall not take or attempt to take, land, have in his or her possession, sell or offer to sell, any American lobster

during the **closed season of February 1 through March 31, 2017**. This is the only closed period for LCMA 5. During the closed season, no dealer shall accept, have in their possession, buy, sell or offer to buy or sell American lobsters from LCMA 5. All traps must be removed from LCMA 5 before the start of the seasonal closure. Lobster fishermen will have a 2-week grace period from February 1 to February 14 to remove all lobster gear within LCMA 5. Any lobsters taken from traps during this grace period must be turned to sea immediately. Additionally, lobster fishermen will have a 1-week grace period from March 24 to March 31 to re-set gear within the closed area, however, traps may not be re-hauled until the season closure ends.

Federal trap fishers are prohibited from setting, hauling, storing, abandoning, or in any way leaving their traps within a LCMA during its closed season. Any fishermen that possess both a LCMA 4 and LCMA 5 Federal Fisheries or State Lobster Pot Permit will be held to the most restrictive measures of both areas. If you have any questions, please contact the Bureau of Marine Fisheries at 609-748-2020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Clarke', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

for

Peter Clarke
Senior Biologist Fisheries