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NOAA FISHERIES DELAYS DECISION ON STRIPED BASS FISHING IN FEDERAL WATERS

NOAA Fisheries will wait until the completion of a new striped bass stock assessment in 2005 before deciding whether to re-open federal waters in the Atlantic to striped bass fishing.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission has recommended that NOAA Fisheries remove the current moratorium on the harvest of Atlantic striped bass in federal waters. To determine what action should be taken in response to the recommendation, NOAA Fisheries began preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement – an analysis of impacts of striped bass fishing in federal waters. Completion of the document has been delayed because of uncertainties in the 2004 Atlantic striped bass stock assessment.

In 2005, the Commission's Striped Bass Technical Committee will conduct another stock assessment of striped bass, which will either confirm the 2004 results or identify problems with that assessment. The new stock assessment will be completed by the fall of 2005 and the DEIS will be updated to incorporate those results. Once complete, the DEIS will be published on the Web and available on CD or in hard copy.

For more information and updates on the development of the striped bass DEIS, go to: http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/state_federal/state_federal.htm.

NOAA Fisheries is dedicated to providing and preserving the nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management, and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.