

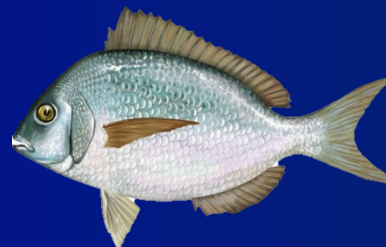


MID-ATLANTIC | FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL



Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass
Framework and Addendum on

Conservation Equivalency, Block Island Sound Transit, & Slot Limits



Council and Board Meeting

August 15, 2018

Objectives

- **Council and Board**

- Review alternatives and initial impacts analysis
- Approve range of alternatives

- **Board only:**

- Approve Draft Addendum XXXI for public comment

Alternatives/Options

- **Set 1: Black sea bass conservation equivalency (CE)**
- **Set 2: Summer flounder CE**
- **Set 3: Block Island Sound transit**
- **Set 4: Slot limits (Council-only)**



BSB Conservation Equivalency

- **1A: No action**
- **1B: Allow BSB recreational conservation equivalency (CE) using summer flounder process**
- **1C: Allow BSB recreational CE using summer flounder process and allowing CE to rollover from one year to next**



Summer Flounder CE process

- **Dec:** Council/Board - coastwide measures or CE?
If CE:
 - Non-preferred coastwide measures
 - Precautionary default measures
- **Jan:** States/regions submit proposals, TC reviews
- **Feb:** Board considers proposals for approval
- **Apr:** Commission sends letter to NMFS certifying that state/regional measures will constrain harvest to RHL
- **May:** NMFS waives federal waters measures through Dec 31



CE Rollover

- Federal waters measures typically waived in May – expires Dec 31
- From Jan 1 – May, non-preferred coastwide measures are in effect in federal waters
- For CE to roll over (1C), non-preferred coastwide and precautionary default measures would need to be appropriate for RHL in both years

Summer Flounder CE Rollover

- **2A: No action**
- **2B: Allow summer flounder CE to rollover from one year to next**

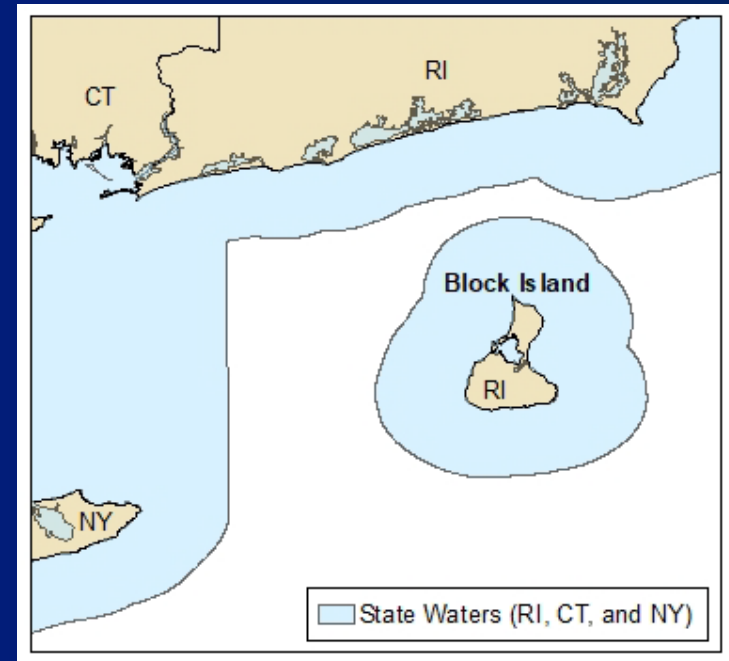
CE Alternatives/Options

- This action does not
 - Implement BSB CE
 - Define the approach for determining state/regional measures (RHL allocations, data to be used, methodology, etc.)
- Details of CE in any given year will be determined through future ASMFC actions
- Current summer flounder process allows for state-by-state or regional measures – BSB alternatives would also allow that



Block Island Sound Transit

- Fishermen must abide by federal regulations when returning to the mainland from state waters around Block Island
- Recent fall BSB rec. closure in federal waters, but open in state waters



Block Island Sound Transit

All alternatives are for

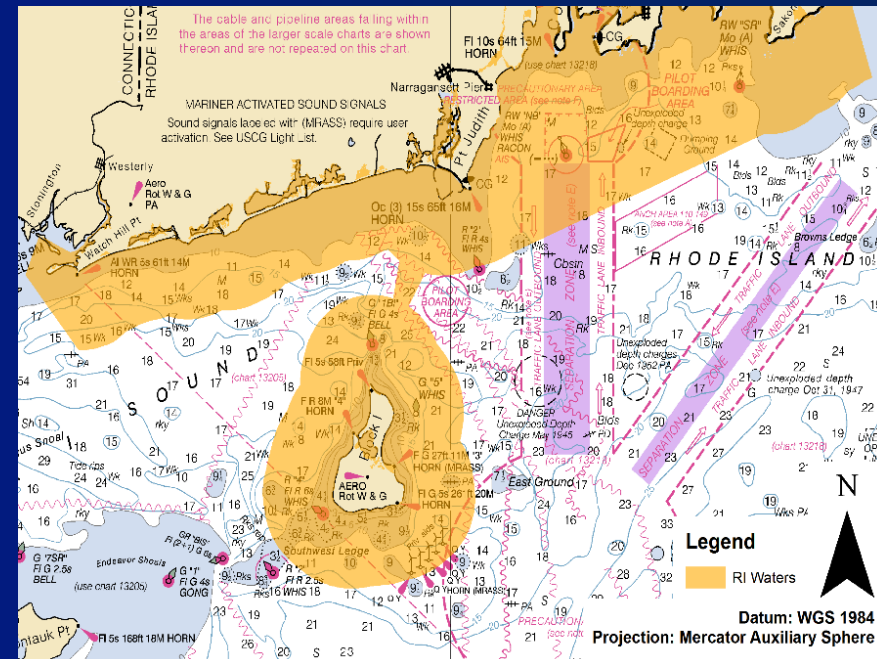
- Summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass only
- Only state permit holders (fed permit holders still bound by most restrictive reg)



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Block Island Sound Transit

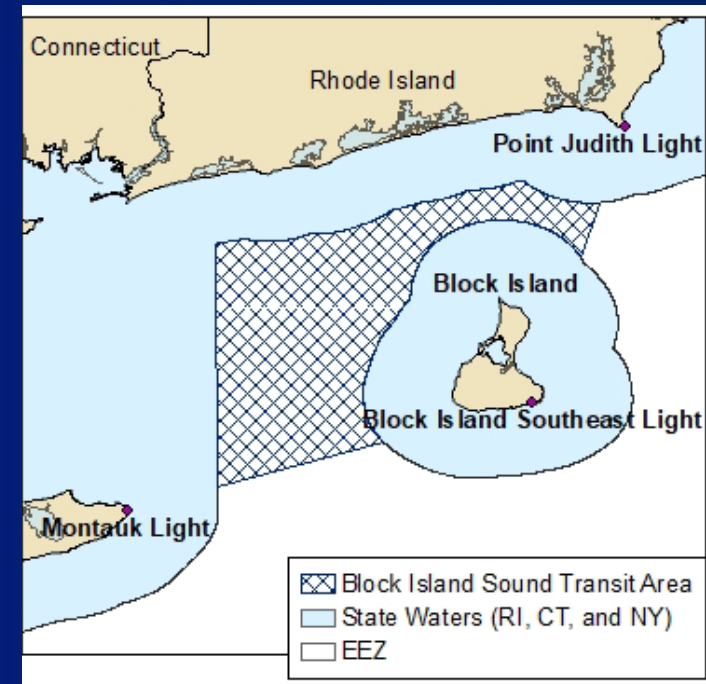
- 3A: No action
- 3B: Transit for RI state-only commercial and recreational permit holders in RI transit corridor
 - Would apply to differences in state and federal
 - Seasons
 - Possession limits
 - Min. fish sizes



Block Island Sound Transit

3C: Transit for RI, CT, NY, and MA permit holders in striped bass transit area

- Permit holders:
 - 3C-1: Only recreational OR
 - 3C-2: Recreational & commercial
- Applying to differences in state and federal
 - 3C-3: Fishing seasons AND/OR
 - 3C-4: Possession limits AND/OR
 - 3C-5: Minimum fish sizes



Slot Limits

- **4A: No action**
- **4B: Update Council's FMP to allow use of a maximum size limit**
 - Would allow for regular slots, split slots, and trophy fish
- *Council-only*
- *No change needed to ASMFC FMP*

Alts/Options		SF, S, BSB	Socio- economic
CE	No action (1A)	+	-
	BSB CE (1B & 1C)	+	+
	CE rollover for BSB and SF (1C and 2B)	0	+
BIS Transit	No action (3A)	+	-
	RI-specific corridor (3B)		
	Striped bass corridor (3C and all sub alts/options)	+	Mostly +
Slot Limits	No action (4A)	+	Mostly -
	Allow use of max size (4B)	-	+ and -

Potential Impacts of BSB CE

Impacts to black sea bass

- Fishing effort/mortality primarily constrained by RHL
- RHL based on best available science, intended to prevent overfishing = positive impacts
- CE won't have different impacts than RHL

Potential Impacts of BSB CE

Positive socio-economic impacts

- Federal waters measures would not be different than state waters
- State waters regs can be tailored to fishery characteristics in individual states/regions (vs uniform coastwide measures in fed waters)
- Potential for increased angler satisfaction, decreased confusion and non-compliance

Potential Impacts of CE Rollover

- Administrative in nature – no impacts to black sea bass or summer flounder stocks
- Positive socio-economic impacts
 - Would not need rule-making to waive fed measures each year (time and cost savings)
 - Would not have different fed/state measures for only part of the year
 - Reduced potential for angler confusion

BIS Transit Impacts

Impacts to summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass

- Slight increase in fishing effort in state waters around Block Island
- Degree of increase depends on alternative(s) selected
- Fishing effort/mortality will continue to be primarily constrained by the RHL and quota
- RHL/quota based on best available scientific info, intended to prevent overfishing = positive impacts

BIS Transit Impacts

Socio-economic impacts

- Slight increase in fishing effort in and harvest from state waters around Block Island
- Increased fishing opportunities, revenues = positive socio-economic impacts
- Enforcement challenges (vary by alternative) = negative socio-economic impacts

Slot Limit Impacts

- In theory, slot limits should have positive impacts on recruitment by protecting larger fish which contribute more to spawning than smaller fish
- Previous analysis for summer flounder
- No analysis for scup and black sea bass

2009 MC Slot Analysis

- Slot limits would increase number of fish harvested
- Discards may increase, but total removals would likely increase
- Increased removals in numbers of fish = increased fishing mortality rate
- Marginal benefits to SSB under some specific slot limits
- Trophy fish eliminated SSB benefits

2013 Wiedenmann et al. MSE

- Small reduction in total number of female summer flounder harvested
- Increased harvest per angler (in #s of fish)
- Generally lower harvest in weight and more discards in weight
- Higher and more frequent ACL overages

Slot Limit Impacts

- Negative impacts to summer flounder, especially under current stock status
 - Increased removals in numbers of fish
 - Increased fishing mortality rate
 - Any increases in SSB may be minor
- Negligible or slight negative impacts to scup?
 - Females and males have similar growth rates
 - Not a particularly long-lived species
 - Potential increased fishing mortality rate
 - Biomass above target

Slot Limit Impacts

- Negligible or slight negative impacts to black sea bass?
 - Males tend to be larger than females
 - Stock is likely resilient to the removal of large males due to contribution of secondary males to spawning
 - Concerns about discard mortality for larger fish due to barotrauma
 - Potential increased fishing mortality rate
 - Biomass above target

Slot Limit Impacts

Mixed socio-economic impacts

■ Positive

- Higher removals in numbers of fish (increased angler satisfaction)

■ Negative

- Low RHLs may require narrow slots
- Required discarding of large fish (decreased angler satisfaction)

AP Comments

- *Conservation equivalency*
 - How can regional measures be compared against a coastwide standard?
- *Block Island Sound transit*
 - RI should extend their state waters so no federal waters separate Block Island from the mainland
 - RI-specific alternative discriminates against other states, possibly illegal
 - Multiple advisors support use of striped bass transit zone

AP Comments

Slot limits

- Many concerned about negative impacts, especially discard mortality
- Potential non-compliance
- Slot limits not necessary for scup
- Discard prohibition would be more beneficial



Other Comments

- 6 email comments asking for consideration of slot limits or a slot + trophy fish

Next Steps

- **Council and Board:** Approve or modify alternatives
- **Board only:**
 - Consider approval of Draft Addendum XXXI for public comment
 - Public hearings September-November?
- Final action at December 2018 joint meeting

Actions Needed Today

- *Council and Board:* approve range of alternatives
- *Board:* approve Addendum XXXI for public comment

