

Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment

Alternatives Quick Reference Guide

How to Use This Reference Guide

This reference guide provides a quick overview of the alternatives under consideration in this amendment. This document is intended to be used in conjunction with the amendment Decision Document, which provides more detail on the alternatives and their basis as well as possible impacts.

Introduction

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) are jointly developing the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment. This amendment considers:

1. Modifying the current allocations between the commercial and recreational sectors for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass.
2. Adding an option to transfer a portion of the allowable landings each year between the commercial and recreational sectors, in either direction, based on the needs of each sector. The current Fishery Management Plan (FMP) does not allow for such transfers.
3. Adding the option for future additional modifications to the commercial/recreational allocation and/or transfer provisions to be considered through an FMP addendum/framework action, as opposed to an amendment.

Commercial/Recreational Allocation Alternatives

Decision Document Section 4.0

The range of commercial/recreational allocation alternatives for each species includes options that would maintain the current allocations as well as options to revise them based on updated data using the same or modified base years. Alternatives for both catch-based and landings-based allocations are under consideration for all three species as described in more detail in the public hearing document.

In the next three tables, the current allocations for each species are highlighted in green. The percentages under landings-based and catch-based alternatives are not directly comparable due to differences in how dead discards are addressed under catch-based allocations and landings-based allocations. Allocation alternatives fluke-1, -2, -3, and -4, scup-1, -2, -3 and -4, and BSB-1, -2, -3 and -4 were added by the Council and Board in August 2021 and are numbered to match the proposal submitted by four Council and Board members.

This reference guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the amendment Decision Document, which provides more detail on the alternatives and their possible impacts.

Summer Flounder Allocation Alternatives (Table 2)

Summer Flounder Catch-Based Allocation Percentages	
Alternative	Basis (see Appendix B for details)
Fluke-4: 50.0% commercial, 50.0% recreational	50/50 weighting of no action/status quo base years and 2004-2018, excluding years with RHL overages (i.e., 2006-2008, 2014, and 2016)
Fluke-2: 45.0% commercial, 55.0% recreational	Average 2004-2018 catch proportions, excluding years with RHL overages (i.e., 2006-2008, 2014 and 2016)
1a-1: 44.0% commercial, 56.0% recreational	Average 2004-2018 catch proportions
1a-2: 43.0% commercial, 57.0% recreational	Supported by multiple approaches: 2009-2018 average catch proportions, approximate status quo harvest per sector compared to 2017/2018, and average of other approaches approved by Council/Board in June 2020
1a-3: 40.0% commercial, 60.0% recreational	Average 2014-2018 catch proportions
Summer Flounder Landings-Based Allocation Percentages	
Alternative	Basis (see Appendix B for details)
1a-4: 60.0% commercial, 40.0% recreational	No action/status quo (1980-1989)
1a-5: 55.0% commercial, 45.0% recreational	Same base years, new data (1981-1989; 1980 data unavailable)
Fluke-3: 51.0% commercial, 49.0% recreational	50/50 weighting of no action/status quo base years and 2004-2018, excluding years with RHL overages (i.e., 2006-2008, 2014, and 2016)
Fluke-1: 47.0% commercial, 53.0% recreational	Average 2004-2018 landings proportions, excluding years with RHL overages (i.e., 2006-2008, 2014 and 2016)
1a-6: 45.0% commercial, 55.0% recreational	Multiple approaches: average 2004-2018 landings proportions and average 2009-2018 landings proportions
1a-7: 41.0% commercial, 59.0% recreational	Average 2014-2018 landings proportions

This reference guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the amendment Decision Document, which provides more detail on the alternatives and their possible impacts.

Scup Allocation Alternatives (Table 3)

Scup Catch-Based Allocation Percentages	
Alternative	Basis (see Appendix B for details)
1b-1: 78.0% commercial, 22.0% recreational	No action/status quo
1b-2: 65.0% commercial, 35.0% recreational	Same base years, new data (1988-1992)
Scup-4: 63.5% commercial, 36.5% recreational	50/50 weighting of no action/status quo base years and 2004-2018, excluding years with RHL overages (i.e., 2004 and 2007-2010)
Scup-2: 62.0% commercial, 38.0% recreational	Average 2004-2018 catch proportions, excluding years with RHL overages (i.e., 2004 and 2007-2010)
1b-3: 61.0% commercial, 39.0% recreational	Multiple approaches: 2009-2018 catch proportions and average of other approaches approved by Council/Board in June 2020
1b-4: 59.0% commercial, 41.0% recreational	Approximate status quo harvest per sector compared to 2018/2019
Scup Landings-Based Allocation Percentages	
Alternative	Basis (see Appendix B for details)
Scup-1: 59.0% commercial, 41.0% recreational	Average 2004-2018 landings proportions, excluding years with RHL overages (i.e., 2004 and 2007-2010)
Scup-3: 58.0% commercial, 42.0% recreational	50/50 weighting of no action/status quo base years and 2004-2018, excluding years with RHL overages (i.e., 2004 and 2007-2010)
1b-5: 57.0% commercial, 43.0% recreational	Multiple approaches: Same base years, new data; average 2014-2018 landings proportions; average 2009-2018 landings proportions
1b-6: 56.0% commercial, 44.0% recreational	Average 2004-2018 landings proportions
1b-7: 50.0% commercial, 50.0% recreational	Approximate status quo harvest per sector compared to 2018/2019

This reference guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the amendment Decision Document, which provides more detail on the alternatives and their possible impacts.

Black Sea Bass Allocation Alternatives (Table 4)

Black Sea Bass Catch-Based Percentages	
Alternative	Basis (see Appendix B for details)
BSB-4: 40.5% commercial, 59.5% recreational	50/50 weighting of no action/status quo base years and 2004-2018, excluding years with RHL overages (i.e., 2009-2010, 2012-2016, and 2018)
BSB-2: 36.0% commercial, 64.0% recreational	Average 2004-2018 landings proportions, excluding years with RHL overages (i.e., 2009-2010, 2012-2016, and 2018)
1c-1: 32.0% commercial, 68.0% recreational	Approximate status quo harvest per sector compared to 2018/2019
1c-2: 28.0% commercial, 72.0% recreational	Average 2004-2018 catch proportions
1c-3: 24.0% commercial, 76.0% recreational	Average 2009-2018 catch proportions
Black Sea Bass Landings-Based Percentages	
Alternative	Basis (see Appendix B for details)
1c-4: 49.0% commercial, 51.0% recreational	No action/status quo
1c-5: 45.0% commercial, 55.0% recreational	Same base years, new data (1983-1992)
BSB-3: 41.0% commercial, 59.0% recreational	50/50 weighting of no action/status quo base years and 2004-2018, excluding years with RHL overages (i.e., 2009-2010, 2012-2016, and 2018)
BSB-1: 37.0% commercial, 63.0% recreational	Average 2004-2018 landings proportions, excluding years with RHL overages (i.e., 2009-2010, 2012-2016, and 2018)
1c-6: 29.0% commercial, 71.0% recreational	Multiple approaches: Approximate status quo harvest per sector compared to 2018/2019 and average of other approaches approved by Council/Board in June 2020
1c-7: 22.0% commercial, 78.0% recreational	Average 2009-2018 landings proportions and average 2014-2018 landings proportions

Allocation Change Phase-In (Table 8)

The alternatives listed below consider if any changes to the allocation percentages should occur in a single year (alternative 1d-1, no phase in) or if the change should be spread over 2, 3, or 5 years (alternatives 1d-2 through 1d-4).

Phase-In Alternatives
1d-1: No phase-in
1d-2: Allocation change evenly spread over 2 years
1d-3: Allocation change evenly spread over 3 years
1d-4: Allocation change evenly spread over 5 years

This reference guide is intended to be used in conjunction with the amendment Decision Document, which provides more detail on the alternatives and their possible impacts.

Quota Transfer Alternatives

Decision Document Section 5.0

The next two sets of alternatives describe options for allowing annual transfer of quota between the commercial and recreational sectors, in either direction on an as-needed basis, as part of the specifications setting process (i.e., the annual process of setting or reviewing catch and landings limits for the upcoming fishing year).

Quota Transfer Process Alternatives (Table 14)

Annual Quota Transfer Alternatives
2a: No action/status quo (do not modify the FMP to allow transfers of annual quota between the commercial and recreational sectors.)
2b: Allow for optional bi-directional transfers through the annual specifications process with pre-defined guidelines and process. The transfer would consist of a portion of the total ABC in the form of a landings limit (i.e., commercial quota and RHL) transfer. Transfers would not occur if the stock is overfished or overfishing is occurring.

Transfer Cap Alternatives (Table 16)

Annual Quota Transfer Cap Alternatives
2c-1: No transfer cap specified; the Council and Board can recommend any amount of the ABC be transferred between fisheries.
2c-2: Maximum transfer amount set at 5% of the ABC.
2c-3: Maximum transfer amount at 10% of the ABC.
2c-4: Maximum transfer amount set at 15% of the ABC.

Framework Provisions

Decision Document Section 6.0

This set of alternatives considers whether the Council and Board should have the ability to make future changes related to certain issues considered through this amendment through a framework action (under the Council's FMP) and/or an addendum (for the Commission's FMP). Frameworks/addenda are modifications to the FMPs that are typically (though not always) more efficient than a full amendment.

Framework/Addendum Provision Alternatives (Table 18)

Framework/addendum provision alternatives
3a: No action/status quo (no changes to framework/addendum provisions; changes to commercial/recreational allocations must be made through an amendment)
3b: Allow changes to commercial/recreational allocations, annual quota transfers, and other measures included in this amendment to be made through framework actions/addenda