

# 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 [Public Hearing Document](#), which provides more detail on the alternatives and their basis as well as possible impacts. The tables, sections, and appendices referenced throughout this document are all contained in the Public Hearing Document. **We strongly encourage all interested individuals to review the full Public Hearing Document before submitting comments.** Informed comments on these alternatives cannot be made based on this document alone without also considering the background and implications described in the Public Hearing Document.

### 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.

### How to Provide Comments

Comments may be submitted at any of five virtual public hearings to be held between February 17 and March 2, 2021 or via written comment through March 16, 2021. Please visit <https://www.mafmc.org/sfsbsb-allocation> for a hearing schedule and instructions for submitting comments.

To be most effective, we request that identify which alternative you support in each of the categories. It is helpful to include specific details as to why you support or oppose a particular alternative.

### Commercial/Recreational Allocation Alternatives

*Public Hearing 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. It is important to note that while these allocation percentages directly affect the annual commercial quotas and recreational harvest limits, these limits are also influenced by total catch limits, recent discard trends, and other factors. Given the magnitude of recent changes in recreational harvest estimates, recreational measures (bag limits, size limits, and seasons) may

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not be able to be liberalized following allocation changes, and in some cases restrictions may still be needed to prevent harvest limit overages.

#### Summer Flounder Allocation Alternatives (Table 2)

<b>Summer Flounder Catch-Based Allocation Percentages</b>	
<b>Alternative</b>	<b>Basis (see Appendix B for details)</b>
<b>1a-1: 44% commercial, 56% recreational</b>	2004-2018 base years
<b>1a-2: 43% commercial, 57% recreational</b>	Supported by multiple approaches: 2009-2018 base years, approximate status quo harvest per sector compared to 2017/2018, and average of other approaches approved by Council/Board in June 2020
<b>1a-3: 40% commercial, 60% recreational</b>	2014-2018 base years
<b>Summer Flounder Landings-Based Allocation Percentages</b>	
<b>Alternative</b>	<b>Basis (see Appendix B for details)</b>
<b>1a-4: 60% commercial, 40% recreational</b>	No action/status quo (1980-1989)
<b>1a-5: 55% commercial, 45% recreational</b>	Same base years, new data (1981-1989; 1980 data unavailable)
<b>1a-6: 45% commercial, 55% recreational</b>	Multiple approaches: 2004-2018 and 2009-2018 base years
<b>1a-7: 41% commercial, 59% recreational</b>	2014-2018 base years

#### Scup Allocation Alternatives (Table 3)

<b>Scup Catch-Based Allocation Percentages</b>	
<b>Alternative</b>	<b>Basis (see Appendix B for details)</b>
<b>1b-1: 78% commercial, 22% recreational</b>	No action/status quo
<b>1b-2: 65% commercial, 35% recreational</b>	Same base years, new data (1988-1992)
<b>1b-3: 61% commercial, 39% recreational</b>	Multiple approaches: 2009-2018 base years and average of other approaches approved by Council/Board in June 2020
<b>1b-4: 59% commercial, 41% recreational</b>	Approximate status quo harvest per sector compared to 2018/2019
<b>Scup Landings-Based Allocation Percentages</b>	
<b>Alternative</b>	<b>Basis (see Appendix B for details)</b>
<b>1b-5: 57% commercial, 43% recreational</b>	Multiple approaches: Same base years, new data; 2014-2018 base years; 2009-2018 base years
<b>1b-6: 56% commercial, 44% recreational</b>	2004-2018 base years
<b>1b-7: 50% commercial, 50% recreational</b>	Approximate status quo harvest per sector compared to 2018/2019

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#### Black Sea Bass Allocation Alternatives (Table 4)

Black Sea Bass Catch-Based Percentages	
Alternative	Basis (see Appendix B for details)
1c-1: 32% commercial, 68% recreational	Approximate status quo harvest per sector compared to 2018/2019
1c-2: 28% commercial, 72% recreational	2004-2018 base years
1c-3: 24% commercial, 76% recreational	2009-2018 base years
Black Sea Bass Landings-Based Percentages	
Alternative	Basis (see Appendix B for details)
1c-4: 49% commercial, 51% recreational	No action/status quo
1c-5: 45% commercial, 55% recreational	Same base years, new data (1983-1992)
1c-6: 29% commercial, 71% 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% commercial, 78% recreational	2009-2018 and 2014-2018 base years

#### 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

### Quota Transfer Alternatives

*Public Hearing 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.

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#### Transfer Cap Alternatives (Table 16)

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

## Framework Provisions

*Public Hearing 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)

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