

Comprehensive Summer Flounder Amendment

Public Scoping Hearings
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2014

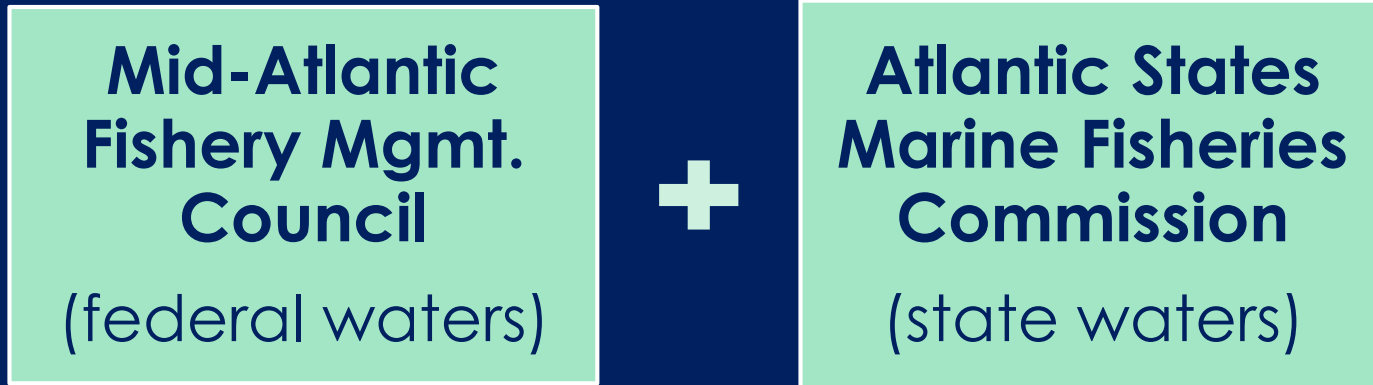


Overview

- ▶ Background on amendment purpose, process, and timeline
- ▶ Description of scoping process
- ▶ Issues that may be considered in the amendment
- ▶ Next steps
- ▶ Public comment

Background

- ▶ Summer flounder are jointly managed by:



- ▶ Proposed amendment is a joint action to modify joint Fishery Management Plan (FMP)
- ▶ Scoping comments will be reviewed by both groups

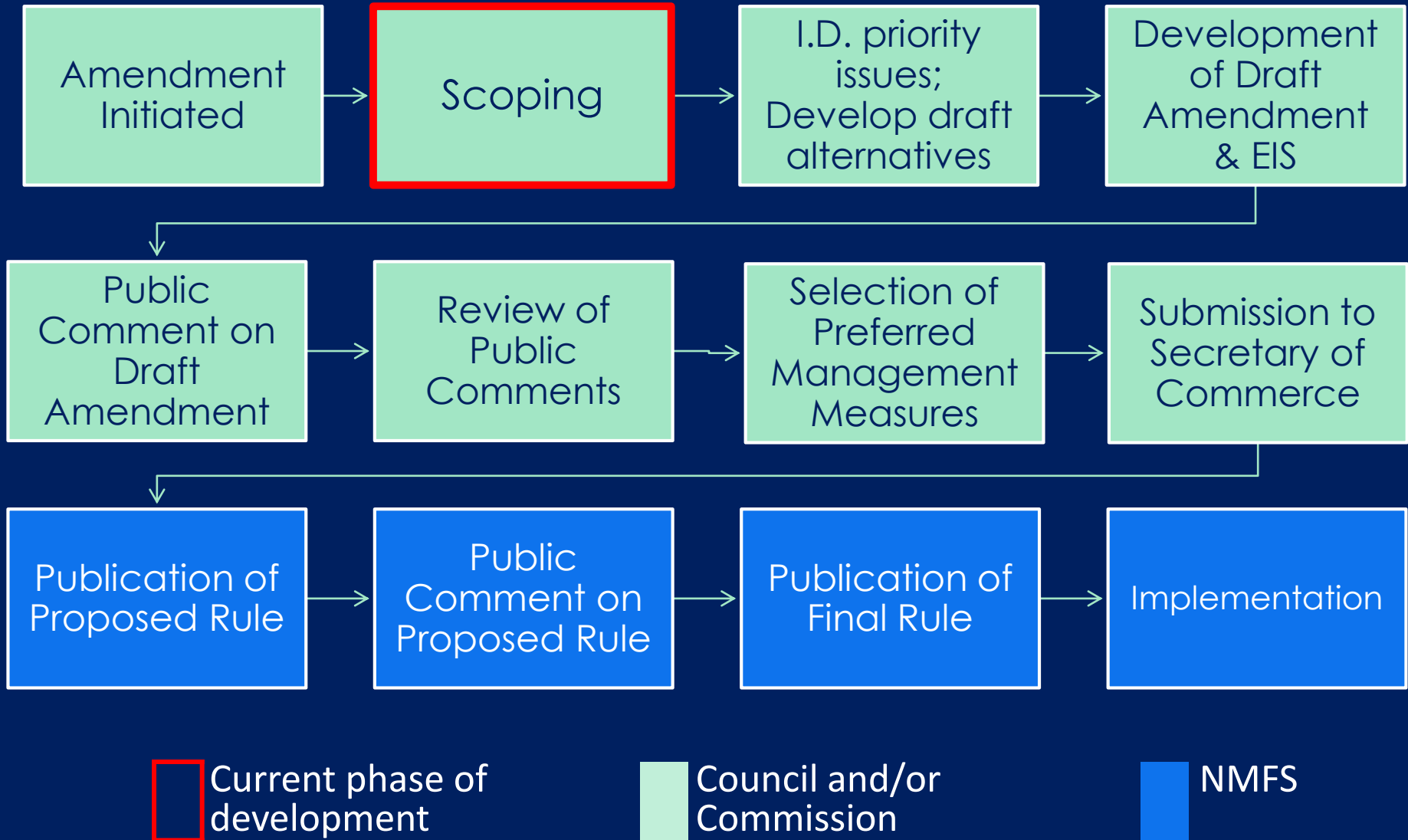
Amendment Purpose

- ▶ Perform a comprehensive review of all aspects of the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP) related to summer flounder
- ▶ Update FMP goals and objectives for summer flounder management
- ▶ Modify management strategies and measures as necessary to achieve those goals and objectives

Why was this action initiated?

- ▶ Issues & concerns raised by Council and Commission members, advisors, management partners, other stakeholders
- ▶ Stakeholder input from Council's Visioning and Strategic Planning process
- ▶ Changing conditions in the summer flounder fisheries (biological, social, economic)

Amendment Process Overview



Amendment Timeline

Fall 2014	Scoping hearings & public comment period
Winter 2014/2015	Council/Commission identify priority issues for inclusion in amendment
Spring/ Summer 2015	Development of options; input from issue-specific working groups and advisors
Fall 2015/ Winter 2016	Council and Commission review draft range of options
Spring/ Summer 2016	Range of options refined and approved
Fall 2016	Council/Commission select preferred options; public hearings
Winter 2016/ Spring 2017	Council/Commission consider public comments; final action; rulemaking

Purpose of Scoping

- ▶ Early and open process for determining scope of issues to be addressed
- ▶ Informs development of a reasonable range of alternatives for further analysis
- ▶ First and best opportunity for the public to make suggestions or raise issues before amendment development

Scoping Process

- ▶ 14 public scoping hearings
 - ▶ MA to VA; September 29 – October 22
- ▶ Written comment period
 - ▶ Submit by email, web form, mail, or fax
 - ▶ To either the Council or Commission

Submit written comments by
11:59 p.m. Friday, October 31, 2014

Potential Amendment Issues

- ▶ List represents range of topics that may be considered
- ▶ Not a list of “preferred alternatives” or measures that will necessarily be included in the amendment
- ▶ Not limiting - anything related to summer flounder management could be considered during amendment process

Management Questions

- ▶ Is the existing objective/allocation/management strategy appropriate for managing the summer flounder fishery?
- ▶ If not, how should it be revised?
- ▶ What else should the Council and Commission consider with regard to this issue?

Issue 1: FMP Goals & Objectives

Current FMP Objectives:

- Reduce fishing mortality in the summer flounder fishery to assure that overfishing does not occur.
- Reduce fishing mortality on immature summer flounder to increase spawning stock biomass.
- Improve the yield from the fishery.
- Promote compatible management regulations between State and Federal jurisdictions.
- Promote uniform and effective enforcement of regulations.
- Minimize regulations to achieve the management objectives stated above.

Issue 2: Commercial/Recreational Allocation

- ▶ Since Amendment 2 (1993), Total Allowable Landings (TAL) allocated 60% to commercial fishery and 40% to recreational fishery

Issue 3: Commercial Management Strategies

- ▶ Amendment 2 (1993) set commercial state-by-state quotas based on 1980-1989 landings
- ▶ Since then, management actions have modified measures such as fishing seasons, gear requirements, permit requirements, etc.

Issue 3: Commercial Management Strategies

- ▶ Potential modifications to:
 - ▶ Gear requirements
 - ▶ Possession limit and trigger requirements
 - ▶ Time/area closures and exemptions
 - ▶ Licensing, permitting, and fleet capacity
 - ▶ Catch monitoring and validation
 - ▶ Commercial quota allocation strategies
 - ▶ Landings flexibility (regional, coastwide, other)

Issue 4: Recreational Management Strategies

- ▶ Amendment 2 (1993) introduced annual coastwide Recreational Harvest Limit (RHL)
- ▶ Under Conservation Equivalency, state-by-state shares of the RHL and subsequent state-by-state measures were first implemented in 2001
 - ▶ Harvest targets based on proportion of 1998 landings by state

Issue 4: Recreational Management Strategies

- ▶ Potential modifications to:
 - ▶ Bag, size, seasonal limit requirements
 - ▶ Gear requirements and restrictions
 - ▶ Inter-jurisdictional management (incl. Conservation Equivalency)
 - ▶ Strategies specific to for-hire and/or private angler sectors
 - ▶ Recreational quota allocation strategies (by state, fishing sector, other)

Issue 5: Discards

- ▶ Discards persist in both the commercial and recreational fisheries
- ▶ Recreational discards have increased overall since 1981
- ▶ Commercial discards have constituted 8% of the total catch since 1982
- ▶ Discard losses in otter trawl & scallop dredge fisheries account for approx. 14% of the total commercial catch (assumed discard mortality rate of 80%)

Other Issues

- ▶ Ecosystem, Habitat, Bycatch, and Protected Species
- ▶ Data Collection Requirements and Protocols

Public Comments

We are seeking comments on:

- ▶ Current measures and strategies that should or should not be modified
- ▶ New measures and strategies that should or should not be considered
- ▶ Fishery trends that managers should consider
- ▶ Any other issues or concerns that should be considered or addressed in the amendment

Next Steps

- ▶ Written comments and hearing summaries will be compiled for review by both the Council and Commission
- ▶ Joint meeting in late 2014 or early 2015 to review comments and identify priority issues for inclusion in the amendment

Questions and Comments



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