



**DRAFT Action Plan (as of 5/22/14)**

Amendment 21 to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan  
(Summer Flounder Management)

**Council:** Mid-Atlantic

**Title of Action:** Amendment 21 to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP

**Applicable Fisheries:** Summer Flounder

**Purpose and Need:** The purpose of this amendment is to complete a comprehensive review of all aspects of the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP related to summer flounder. This will include revisiting and updating the goals and objectives of the plan for summer flounder, as well as re-examining and modifying as necessary any and all fishery management strategies necessary to achieve those goals and objectives.

**Type of NEPA Analysis Expected:** EIS

**Additional Expertise Sought:** The Fisheries Management Action Team (FMAT) for this action will be composed of Council staff and management partners from the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, with input from other organizations as appropriate. The FMAT will serve as the primary team for amendment development and analysis, but will work with several working groups to address specific issues.

Agency	Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT) Role	Person(s)
MAFMC	Fisheries Management (Plan Coordinator)	Kiley Dancy
ASMFC	Fisheries Management (Plan Coordinator; ISFMP Director)	Kirby Rootes-Murdy; Toni Kerns
NMFS NERO	Sustainable Fisheries (Plan Coordinator)	Moira Kelly
NMFS NERO	NEPA	Katherine Richardson
NMFS NERO	Habitat	David Stevenson
NMFS NERO	General Counsel (consulted as needed)	Kevin Collins
NMFS NEFSC	Stock Assessment/Technical	TBD
NMFS NEFSC	Socioeconomics	Scott Steinback

**Working Groups:** The FMAT will work with several topic-specific working groups that will be formed to complete work or analyses related to specific aspects of summer flounder management. The composition of each working group has yet to be determined, but will include representatives with a wide range of expertise and experience with issues to be addressed in the amendment. Issues to be addressed by each working group have yet to be determined, but will relate to issues described below under "types of measures expected to be considered."

**Types of Measures Expected to be Considered:** At this time, the FMAT will be developing a wide range of management options for the Council to consider. These could include alternatives to address issues including, but not limited to:

- FMP goals and objectives for summer flounder
- Commercial summer flounder management measures and strategies:
  - Commercial fishing gear requirements and restrictions, including, but not limited to: mesh requirements, net dimensions, bycatch reduction devices, head and footrope lengths
  - Minimum fish size requirements
  - Possession limit and trigger requirements
  - Time/area closures and exemption programs
  - Licensing
  - Commercial quota allocation strategies
  - Landings flexibility (regional, coastwide, other)
- Recreational summer flounder management measures and strategies:
  - Recreational bag limits, size limits, and seasonal limits
  - Recreational fishing gear requirements and restrictions
  - Inter-jurisdictional management processes and strategies (including use of state-by-state or regional Conservation Equivalency vs. Coastwide measures)
  - Management strategies specific to the party/charter (for-hire) recreational fleet
  - Management strategies specific to private recreational anglers
  - Recreational quota allocation strategies (by state, fishing sector, other)
- Quota allocation between the commercial and recreational fisheries
- Summer flounder discards in the commercial and recreational fisheries
- Ecosystem, habitat, bycatch, and protected species issues
- Data collection requirements and protocols

**Applicable laws/issues:**

Magnuson-Stevens Act	Yes
Administrative Procedures Act	Yes
Regulatory Flexibility Act	Yes
Paperwork Reduction Act	Possibly; depends on data collection needs
Coastal Zone Management Act	Possibly; depends on effects of the action on the resources of the coastal states in the management unit
Endangered Species Act	Possibly; level of consultation, if necessary, depends on the actions taken
E.O. 12866 (Regulatory Planning and Review)	Yes
E.O. 12630 (Takings)	Possibly; legal review will confirm
E.O. 13123 (Federalism)	Possibly; legal review will confirm
Essential Fish Habitat	Possibly; level of consultation, if necessary, depends on the actions taken
Information Quality Act	Yes

**DRAFT Amendment Timeline:**

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Action</b>
December 2013	Council initiates amendment
April/May 2014	Draft action plan developed; Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT) formed
June 2014	MAFMC Demersal Committee meeting to discuss scoping process
July 2014	Initial FMAT meeting; scoping document finalized; Notice of Intent to prepare EIS filed; Advisory Panel meeting
Late Summer/Fall 2014	Scoping hearings and comment period
Fall 2014	Priority issues for inclusion in amendment identified; issue-specific working groups established; FMAT develops Terms of Reference for working groups
Winter 2014/2015	FMAT and working group meetings; FMAT begins development of alternatives
Spring/Summer 2015	FMAT continues development of alternatives (with working group input); meetings of the FMAT, working groups, Demersal Committee, Advisory Panel
Fall 2015/Winter 2016	Demersal Committee reviews FMAT and working group recommendations for alternatives; DEIS development begins
Spring/Summer 2016	Range of alternatives refined and approved; DEIS development continues
Fall 2016	DEIS finalized; MAFMC selects preferred alternatives; public hearings
Winter 2016/2017	MAFMC considers public comments; final action
Winter/Spring 2017	Document perfection with NMFS; proposed rule; comment period; final rule
Spring/Summer 2017	Final rule effective