



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

## 2018 Spring Meeting Summary

*Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

2018 Spring Meeting  
Alexandria, VA  
April 30 – May 3, 2018

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### Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

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## **SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP AND BLACK SEA BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD JOINTLY WITH THE MID-ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (APRIL 30, 2018)**

### ***Meeting Summary***

The Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board (Board) and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) met jointly to consider a number of issues. These include (1) approving a joint Summer Flounder Commercial Issues Amendment Public Hearing Document (PHD) for public comment; (2) a draft discussion document regarding a strategic plan for reforming recreational black sea bass management; (3) draft alternatives for the recreational management framework and addendum for all three species; and (4) preliminary harvest estimates from the February 2018 recreational black sea bass fishery.

### **Summer Flounder Commercial Issues Amendment Public Hearing Document**

The PHD serves as an abridged version of the Draft Summer Flounder Commercial Issues Amendment, which the Board also approved for public comment. This action proposes potential modifications to the commercial summer flounder fishery, as well as the existing fishery management plan objectives for summer flounder.

This amendment was initiated in 2014 in response to stakeholder feedback received during the Council's visioning project regarding concerns with the current summer flounder commercial management program. Specifically, the Draft Amendment seeks public input on four issues:

- 1. Requalifying criteria for federal commercial moratorium permits to address latent effort in the fishery** – Federal permit qualification criteria have not changed since establishment in 1993. Some stakeholders believe the original permit qualifications criteria resulted in the current number of federal permits being too high relative to recent stock size estimates and resulting quotas. Additionally, given restrictions and stock trends in other fisheries, there is concern that inactive permits may reenter the summer flounder fishery, putting further economic strain on participating vessels. The Amendment offers options to reduce the number of commercial federal moratorium permits based on qualifying criteria.
- 2. Modifying commercial quota allocation** – The current commercial allocation was last modified in 1993 and is perceived by many as outdated given its basis in 1980-1989 landings data. Summer flounder distribution, biomass, and fishing effort have changed since then, and some believe the initial allocations may not have been equitable or were based on flawed data; therefore, stakeholders requested evaluation of alternative allocation systems. The Amendment offer a range of options to modify and re-allocate the current annual commercial state by state quota allocations.
- 3. Adding commercial landings flexibility as a framework issue in the Council's FMP** – Landings flexibility policies would give commercial vessels greater freedom to land or possess summer flounder in the state(s) of their choice. Although such policies may be more effectively developed by state level agreements, the Board and Council are interested in having the option to pursue broader landings flexibility policies via framework action/addenda in the future if necessary. This action does not consider implementing landings flexibility policies at this time.

4. **Revise the FMP objectives for summer flounder** – Many managers and stakeholders believe that the current objectives have become outdated and could provide more meaningful guidance if updated. Although the revisions to FMP objectives are not proposed as an explicit set of options in the Amendment, they are provided for public comment.

The Board and Council will determine the public comment period as well as the schedule of public hearings following the June Council Meeting, and notify the public through a joint press release. The Board and Council will consider taking final action on this amendment in December 2018.

#### **Draft Strategic Plan for Reforming Recreational Black Sea Bass Management**

A draft discussion document on reforming recreational black sea bass management was developed by the Board Chair and Vice-Chair in response to wide-ranging concerns with the current management program. The draft is aimed at providing a starting point for discussion on the development of a comprehensive reform initiative. At the meeting, the draft was presented and briefly discussed. The Board and Council offered support for continued development of the strategy over the next few months, first, through direct input from members, then through a joint working group process. The draft document, as modified through the initial review process, will be brought back before the Board and Council.

#### **Draft Alternatives for the Recreational Management Framework and Addendum**

The Council and Board considered draft alternatives for the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Recreational Management Framework and Addendum. This action was initiated at the December 2017 joint meeting. After considering the recommendations of the Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT), and the Council's Demersal Committee and a subset of the Board, the Board and Council approved alternatives to include in a draft public hearing document. The draft alternatives include options for conservation equivalency for recreational black sea bass, conservation equivalency rollover, slot limits in recreational fisheries for all three species, and Block Island Sound transit provisions. The transit provision alternatives include two alternative transit zone areas that could apply to recreational fisheries only, or both commercial and recreational fisheries for all three species, depending on the alternatives selected. The Board and Council considered but chose not to include alternatives for evaluating and modifying recreational management measures based on a comparison of catch to the Annual Catch Limit in this action. A draft document will be presented at the August joint meeting of the Board and Council with final action tentatively scheduled for December 2018.

#### **Preliminary February 2018 Recreational Black Sea Bass Harvest Estimates**

Finally, the Board and Council received a report on the preliminary harvest estimates for the February 2018 black sea bass recreational fishery. Virginia and North Carolina were the only states to participate in the fishery, and the total harvest between both states is estimated between 4,826 and 5,206 pounds of black sea bass.

For more information on black sea bass, please contact Caitlin Starks, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [cstarks@asmfc.org](mailto:cstarks@asmfc.org) and Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org) for more information on summer flounder and scup.

## ***Motions***

### **Summer Flounder Draft Amendment**

#### **Move to include two additional options to the summer flounder draft amendment:**

- to negotiate new state quota shares
- to include coastwide quota and management

MAFMC: Motion made by Mr. DiLernia and seconded by Ms. Nolan. Motion fails (6 in favor, 10 opposed).

ASMFC: Motion made by Mr. Hasbrouck and seconded by Mr. Gates.

#### **Move to develop two additional options to the summer flounder draft amendment:**

- to negotiate new state quota shares
- to include coastwide quota and management

MAFMC: Motion made by Mr. Heins and seconded by Ms. Nolan. Motion fails (Roll Call: In favor – Maniscalco, Heins, Nolan, DiLernia, Nowalsky, Warren, Pentony; Opposed – Baab, Michels, Gwin, DeFur, Mann, O'Reilly, Batsavage, Hemilright, Winslow).

ASMFC: Motion made by Mr. Hasbrouck and seconded by Mr. Gates. Motion passes (Roll Call: In Favor- MA, RI, CT, NY, DE, NMFS; Opposed- NJ, MD, PRFC, VA, NC).

#### **Move to approve the draft summer flounder commercial issues amendment hearing document for public comment as modified today.**

MAFMC: Motion made by Mr. Mann and seconded by Mr. Batsavage. Motion carries (12 in favor, 4 opposed).

ASMFC: Motion by Mr. O'Reilly, second by Mr. Clark. Motion passes (9 in favor, 2 opposed).

#### **Move to approve the Commission's Summer Flounder Commercial Issues Draft Amendment document for public hearings.**

Board: Motion made by Mr. O'Reilly and seconded by Mr. Clark. Motion carries (9 in favor, 2 opposed).

### **Draft Alternatives for Framework/Addendum on Recreational Issues**

**Move to include an additional option that defines a discrete transit zone from Rhode Island state waters around Block Island, Rhode Island to Rhode Island state waters to the north. Any legally Rhode Island permitted fisher fishing in Rhode Island waters for summer flounder, black sea bass, and scup will be allowed to transit the EEZ in this zone with legally harvested regulated species as long as gear stowage requirements are met and no fishing occurs in the zone while transiting.**

ASMFC: Motion made by Mr. Reid and seconded by Ms. Meserve. Motion passes by consent.

MAFMC: Motion made by Mr. O'Reilly and seconded by Mr. Michels. Motion passes by consent.

#### **Move to approve the draft alternatives, as presented by staff and as modified today, for the recreational framework and addendum.**

MAFMC: Motion made by Mr. Heins and seconded by Mr. deFur. Motion carries unanimously.

ASMFC: Motion made by Mr. Hasbrouck and seconded by Rep. Peake. Motion carries unanimously.