



Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Scientific and Statistical Committee

Background

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) requests that the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) review several aspects of the [Recreational Measures Setting Process Framework/Addenda](#), as summarized in the terms of reference (TORs) below. This management action is being developed by the Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission). Commission leadership provided input into these TORs. The SSC must complete their review during their July 23-25, 2024 meeting. Starting in March 2024 or as soon as possible, a subgroup of the SSC will work with the Fishery Management Action Team/Plan Development Team (FMAT/PDT) to review the ongoing and planned work to develop and analyze the management alternatives in this action. To ensure timely review and opportunities to revise the analyses and alternatives, as appropriate, the SSC sub-group may provide a preliminary response to some TORs prior to a full SSC review in July 2024.

Terms of Reference:

- 1) Provide feedback on the potential effects the management alternatives (including the no action alternative) might have on future ABC recommendations and scientific uncertainty considerations.
 - a) Provide an evaluation of the potential biological impacts on the stocks and potential quota impacts to the commercial sector.
- 2) Compare and provide a relative ranking of all alternatives in terms of their potential to: 1) provide stability in recreational management measures, 2) appropriately respond to changes in stock status, and 3) prevent overfishing. Comment on other socioeconomic considerations (e.g., angler welfare) if possible based on available information. Describe tradeoffs in these considerations inherent in each alternative. These considerations can be ranked separately; they need not be combined into one ranking system. The SSC should not select an overall preferred alternative.
- 3) Are the fishery and stock status indicators and associated threshold values (e.g., the categories of biomass and fishing mortality) under each alternative reasonably defined for determining when a change in recreational management measures is needed?
- 4) Review the approaches for defining fishing mortality (F) targets for recreational measures and use of fishing mortality indicators for determining when measures should change.

- a) Review and provide feedback on the analyses to support these approaches. Are the methods sound and applied appropriately for potential application in management?
 - b) Evaluate the scientific and biological appropriateness and identify any uncertainties of partitioning stock-wide F reference points and F projections into sector-specific reference points and projections for use in management.
 - c) Comment on whether the potential recreational F-based approaches could allow recreational measures to more appropriately respond to changes in stock status compared to setting measures based on a harvest target (e.g., the Recreational Harvest Limit or a harvest target set based on the current implementation of the Percent Change Approach).
- 5) Address the following for the Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) conclusions, if applicable:
- a) Given the limited scope of this analysis, what are the most important results, conclusions, and caveats in the MSE report for the Council and the Commission's Policy Board to consider when selecting a preferred alternative?
 - b) Given the MSE is specific to summer flounder, are there other factors and/or areas of uncertainty to consider for scup, black sea bass, and bluefish?
- 6) If appropriate, provide recommendations for additional work that could be completed by the FMAT/PDT or the MSE team prior to public hearings. Any additional analysis should help the public understand the alternatives and their impacts and should help the Council and Policy Board select their preferred alternative(s). It must not result in the identification of new alternatives outside the range of alternatives approved for public hearings.