



# Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

## ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Board

*Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries*

ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Board  
February 14, 2024

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### Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

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## **SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP AND BLACK SEA BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (FEBRUARY 14, 2024)**

### ***Meeting Summary***

The Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Board met via webinar to consider proposals for the 2024 and 2025 recreational management measures for summer flounder and scup and 2024 recreational season adjustments for black sea bass.

### **Background**

In December 2023, the Board and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) met jointly to set recreational measures for 2024 and 2025 for summer flounder and scup. The Percent Change Approach, as implemented under Addendum XXXIV to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP), was used in conjunction with the Recreation Demand Model (RDM) to determine that summer flounder and scup require a 28% and 10% reduction in harvest in 2024, respectively. For black sea bass, the Board and Council agreed to maintain status quo recreational measures in 2024 for several reasons, which are outlined in the [December 2023 Council and Board Joint Meeting Summary](#). However, the Board allowed states to propose minor season adjustments (e.g., maintain a Saturday opening of a black sea bass season) if the projected 2024 black sea bass harvest with season adjustments did not increase from projected 2024 status quo harvest. Any season adjustments were required to be supported by the RDM and approved by the Board.

For summer flounder, the Board and Council continued the regional conservation equivalency process as outlined in Addendum XXXII, which requires each region (MA, RI, CT-NY, NJ, DE-VA, NC) to implement summer flounder regulations that will achieve the cumulative required harvest reduction by weight. In December, the Board specified that each region must take a 28% reduction, but exempted North Carolina from further restricting summer flounder measures due to the state's low levels of harvest and already restrictive measures which aim to address the objectives of the state's Southern Flounder FMP. For scup, the Board and Council recommended removing the early season closure from January 1-April 30 in federal waters in favor of taking the full 10% reduction through the Commission's state water regulation setting process.

In January 2024, the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Technical Committee used the RDM to recommend options for 2024 and 2025 recreational measures for summer flounder and scup which achieve a 28% and 10% reduction, respectively, and evaluate minor adjustments to the 2024 black sea bass season.

### **2024 and 2025 Summer Flounder and Scup Recreational Measures and 2024 Black Sea Bass Season Adjustments**

On February 14, 2024, the Board reviewed and approved the a range of state/regional options for 2024 and 2025 summer flounder and scup measures as developed by the RDM, which can be [found here](#). The approved options achieve the required reductions. The Board also reviewed and approved minor adjustments to Massachusetts's and Connecticut's 2024 black sea bass seasons. The next step is for the states, through their rule making process, to select regulations from the approved range of options and inform the Commission of their final 2024 and 2025 state waters measures for summer flounder and scup, and 2024 adjusted seasons for black sea bass. 2024 state water measures for black sea bass will remain unchanged from 2023, with the exception of Massachusetts and Connecticut, who are considering a season adjustment to start on a Saturday.

### **Summer Flounder Commercial Mesh Exemptions**

The Board also initiated an addendum to address potential changes to two summer flounder commercial mesh exemptions – the Small Mesh Exemption Program (SMEP) and the flynet exemption. The draft addendum will be developed jointly with the Council, who initiated a complementary Framework, and will consider moving the boundary of the SMEP area westward and changing the definition of a flynet. The draft addendum will be considered for public comment at a joint meeting with the Council in April.

For more information on black sea bass, please contact Tracey Bauer, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [tbauer@asmfc.org](mailto:tbauer@asmfc.org), and for more information on scup and summer flounder, contact Chelsea Tuohy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [ctuohy@asmfc.org](mailto:ctuohy@asmfc.org).

### ***Motions***

#### **Summer Flounder Commercial Mesh Exemption Addendum**

**Move to initiate an Addendum to address summer flounder commercial mesh exemptions including clarifying the definition of a flynet and moving the western boundary of the small-mesh exemption area.**

Motion made by Mr. Reid and seconded by Mr. Luisi. Motion carries by unanimous consent.

#### **2024 Black Sea Bass Season Adjustments**

**Move to approve the black sea bass season adjustments for Massachusetts and Connecticut for the 2024 fishing year as presented today.**

Motion made by Dr. McNamee and seconded Mr. Hasbrouck. Motion carries without objection and one abstention from NOAA Fisheries.

#### **Scup 2024 and 2025 Recreational Management Measures**

**Move to approve the range of state/regional options for 2024 and 2025 scup recreational management measures developed using the Recreation Demand Model as presented today for the states from Massachusetts through New Jersey. Recreational management measures for the states from Delaware through North Carolina will consist of a 30 fish bag limit, year-round open season, and 9-inch minimum size limit for 2024 and 2025.**

Motion made by Dr. McNamee and seconded by Mr. Hasbrouck. Motion carries 8 in favor (CT, NY, RI, NJ, NC, VA, MA, MD), 1 null (DE), 3 abstentions (NH, PRFC, NOAA Fisheries).

#### **Summer Flounder 2024 and 2025 Recreational Management Measures**

**Move to approve the range of state/regional options for 2024 and 2025 summer flounder recreational management measures developed using the Recreation Demand Model as presented today including maintenance of Connecticut's enhanced shore sites for summer flounder which includes a 17" minimum size limit.**

Motion made by Dr. McNamee and seconded by Mr. Grist. Motion passes without objection and one abstention from NOAA Fisheries.