



## *Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*

# NEWS RELEASE

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*Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations of all Atlantic coast fish species, or successful restoration  
well in progress by the year 2015*

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### **ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass Board Initiates Draft Addendum XXV to Address 2014 Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass Recreational Fisheries**

St. Simons Island, GA – The Commission’s Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board initiated the development of a Draft Addendum XXV to the Summer Flounder Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The Draft Addendum will propose alternate management approaches for the 2014 recreational summer flounder fishery to achieve more equity in recreational harvest opportunities along the coast. It will include options that allow for the averaging of harvest estimates, mandatory regions, and the sharing of unused quota.

Draft Addendum XXV is initiated to respond to the unintended consequence of using conservation equivalency (e.g., state-specific recreational management measures) to stay within the annually established coastwide recreational harvest limit for summer flounder. Although the shift away from coastwide management to state conservation equivalency addressed the interests of some states, it created difficulties for other states as overages occurred due largely to state shares and limits not reflecting local abundance of summer flounder and its availability to recreational fishermen. State targets were based solely upon the 1998 estimate of harvest from the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey.

The FMP did not provide the flexibility to adjust state harvest targets or the management strategy except through the addendum process. This has resulted in ever increasing size limits, reduced bag limits, and shorter seasons for most of the states while the stock was at a low level and recovering. The impact of these restrictive measures seemed to affect New York the most, where the size limit reached 21 inches by 2009, which also saw a very short season including mid-season closure. In 2012, with a fully recovered stock, New York’s minimum size (19.5 inches) was at least one inch higher than any other state, one and a half inches higher than its Long Island Sound bordering state, Connecticut and two inches greater than its ocean / New York Harbor bordering state, New Jersey.

The Draft Addendum will also propose the continuation of ad hoc approaches to regional measures in the black sea bass recreational fishery. Addendum XXIII allowed for a combination of regional and state-by-state measures for the 2013 fishing year. Addendum XXIII expires at the end of 2013. Due to the wide geographic range of this species, the application of a coastwide minimum size, possession limit, and season

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The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species.

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restrictions may not affect every area involved in the fishery the same way. States were concerned the coastwide regulations disproportionately impact states within the management unit; therefore, the Board approved Addenda XXI-XXIV which allowed for regional and state-by-state measures in 2011-2013 for state waters only. The initiation of Draft Addendum XXV is intended to provide continued management flexibility to mitigate potential disproportionate impacts on the states that can result from coastwide measures.

Draft Addendum XXV will be presented to the Board for its consideration and approval for public comment at its joint December meeting with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council in Annapolis, Maryland. For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at [krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740.

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