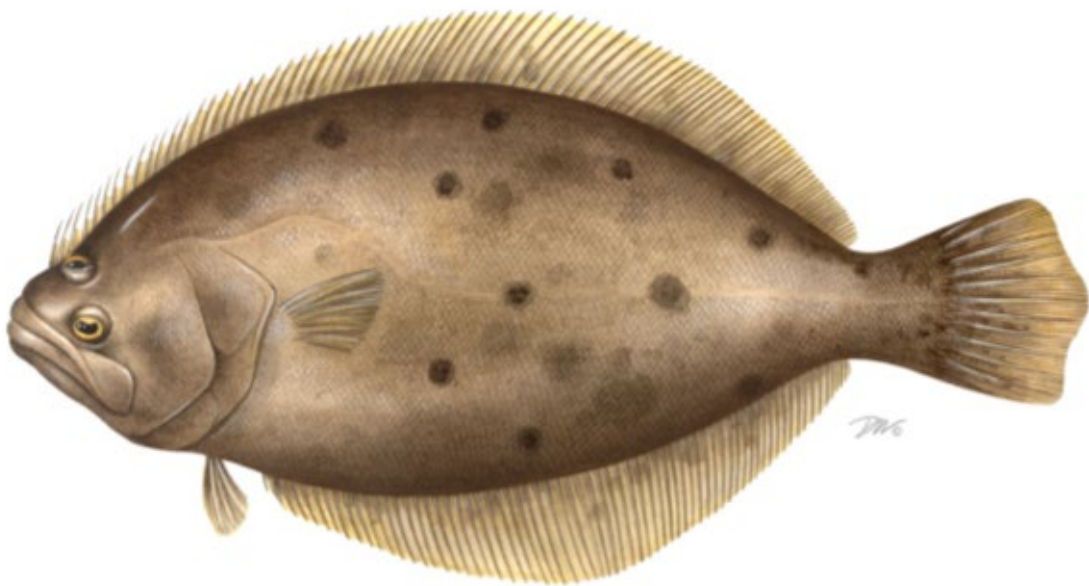


ATLANTIC STATES MARINE FISHERIES COMMISSION

REVIEW OF THE INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN

FOR SUMMER FLOUNDER
(Paralichthys dentatus)

2016 FISHING YEAR



Prepared by the Plan Review Team

Approved by the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass
Board November 2017

REVIEW OF THE INTERSTATE FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR SUMMER FLOUNDER (*Paralichthys dentatus*)

I. Status of the Fishery Management Plan

The summer flounder (*Paralichthys dentatus*) fishery of the Atlantic Coast is managed jointly by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board (Board) and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC or Council). The original ASMFC Fishery Management Plan (FMP), established in 1982, recommended a 14" minimum size limit. The MAFMC Plan, prepared in 1988 and based on the ASMFC plan, established a 13" minimum size limit. Since then, fourteen amendments have been developed and approved, except Amendment 1 which would have required a 5-1/2" minimum mesh size in the codend of trawls and Amendment 11 which would have reallocated commercial quota shares.

The objectives of the FMP have not changed and are to: 1) reduce fishing mortality of summer flounder to assure overfishing does not occur; 2) reduce fishing mortality on immature summer flounder to increase spawning stock biomass; 3) improve yield from the fishery; 4) promote compatible management regulations between State and Federal jurisdictions; 5) promote uniform and effective enforcement of regulations; and 6) minimize regulations to achieve the stated objectives.

The management unit includes summer flounder in US waters in the western Atlantic Ocean from the southern border of North Carolina northward to the US - Canadian border. States and jurisdictions with a declared interest in the summer flounder FMP include all those from North Carolina through Massachusetts except Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia, as well as the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). An ASMFC Plan Review Team, Technical Committee, species board, and the MAFMC Demersal Committee are actively working on this plan. A joint ASMFC-MAFMC Technical Monitoring Committee provides annual management advice.

Amendment 2 (approved in August 1993) provided a strategy for reducing fishing mortality to F_{max} , while avoiding unreasonable impacts on fishermen. Commercial management measures included a federal (EEZ) moratorium on entry into the commercial fishery, vessel and dealer permitting and reporting requirements, an annual commercial quota, and minimum mesh requirements (5.5" diamond or 6" square mesh in the net's codend) with an exemption program. Recreational fishery measures include open access for-hire permit requirements, minimum size limits, possession limits, and seasonal closures.

The management system established under Amendment 2 has been modified by the following amendments, framework actions, and addenda. Amendment 3 (approved in July 1993) revised the mesh requirement exemption program and modified the poundage thresholds for the mesh requirements (change to two seasonal thresholds instead of year-round 100 lbs). Amendment 4 (approved in September 1993) revised the state-specific shares of the coastwide commercial quota allocation in response to a reporting issue in Connecticut. Amendment 5 (approved in

December 1993) allows states to transfer or combine their commercial quota shares. Amendment 6 (approved in May 1994) allows properly stowed nets with a cod end mesh size less than that stipulated in the plan to be aboard vessels in the summer flounder fishery. Amendment 7 (approved May 1995) adjusted the stock rebuilding schedule and capped the 1996-1997 commercial quotas at 18.51 million pounds. There is no Amendment 8 or 9 to the ASMFC FMP. The Council adopted Scup management measures as Amendment 8 and Black Sea Bass measures as Amendment 9, while the Board adopted separate Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Plans.

Amendment 10, approved by the Board in May 1997, initially sought to examine the commercial quota management system. Its scope was expanded to address a number of federal and state issues in the fishery, including: 1) allow framework adjustments to the minimum mesh for any portion of the net; 2) require 5.5" diamond or 6" square mesh in the entire net of trawls; 3) continue the federal moratorium on commercial entry; 4) remove the requirement that federally permitted vessels must land summer flounder every year; 5) modify the federal vessel replacement criteria; 6) implement state *de minimis* criteria; 7) prohibit transfer at sea; 8) require states to report summer flounder landings from state waters to the NMFS; and 9) allow states to implement a summer flounder filet at sea permit system. The amendment also considered alternative commercial quota schemes, including 1) a trimester quota with state-by-state shares during summer, 2) a trimester coastwide quota of equal periods, and 3) a revision to the existing state-by-state allocation formula. Ultimately, the Board and Council decided to maintain the current state-by-state quota allocation system.

Amendment 12, approved by the Board in October 1998, was developed to bring the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan in to compliance with the new and revised National Standards and other required provisions of the Sustainable Fisheries Act. Specifically, the amendment revised the overfishing definitions (National Standard 1) for summer flounder, scup and black sea bass and addressed the new and revised standards relative to the existing management measures (National Standard 8-consider effects on fishing communities, National Standard 9-reduce bycatch, National Standard 10-promote safety at sea). The Amendment also identified essential habitat for summer flounder, scup and black sea bass. Finally, Amendment 12 added a framework adjustment procedure that allows the Council to add or modify management measures through a streamlined public review process. Amendment 12 was partially approved by NMFS on April 28, 1999, with the disapproved measures mostly relating to concerns with essential fish habitat measures that were later addressed.

In December 2000, the Board approved Amendment 13. Although there were some management alternatives included in public hearing drafts of the document that could have resulted in changes to summer flounder management measures, none were approved for implementation. As a result, Amendment 13 had no impact on the summer flounder fishery.

Framework Adjustment 2 to the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass FMP, adopted in January 2001, provided the information and analyses necessary to implement a system of

conservation equivalency for the recreational summer flounder fishery. Based on a coastwide recreational harvest limit, Framework 2 allows states to customize summer flounder recreational management measures to address issues associated with the availability of summer flounder on spatial and temporal scales.

Addenda III and IV were approved on January 29, 2001. Addendum IV provides that, upon the recommendation of the relevant monitoring committee and joint consideration with the Council, the Board will make a decision concerning what state regulations will be rather than forward a recommendation to NMFS. The states will then be responsible for implementing the Board's decision. Addendum III established specifications for the 2001 recreational summer flounder fishery.

The Board approved Addendum VIII in December of 2003. Under this addendum, state-specific targets for recreational landings are derived from the coastwide harvest limit based on each state's proportion of landings reported in 1998, which was the last year in which states were under a common set of management measures.

The Board approved Addendum XIII in August of 2004. This addendum modifies the FMP such that, within a given year, landings limits for the summer flounder, scup, and/or black sea bass can be specified for up to three years. Multi-year limits do not have to be constant from year to year, but instead are based upon expectations of future stock conditions as indicated by the best available scientific information during the year in which specifications are set.

The Board approved Addendum XV in December of 2004. The addendum was developed to allow for a change in the allocation scheme for the increase commercial quota from 2004 to 2005, approximately 1.3 million pounds, as well as the additional quota from 2004 to 2006, approximately 1.6 million pounds. For the fishing years 2005 and 2006, the associated quota increases were allocated to the following states as a bycatch allocation: 75,000 pounds of summer flounder were allocated each to Maryland, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts; 15,000 lbs were allocated to Delaware, 5,000 lbs to Maine, and 90 lbs to New Hampshire.

The Board approved Addendum XVII in August of 2005. Addendum XVII established a program wherein the Board could combine state-by-state allocations into voluntary regions. This is an additional management tool in the management toolbox. This addendum also allowed the averaging or combination of multiple years of data (i.e. landings-per-angler, length-frequency distributions) in analyses to determine the impacts of proposed recreational management programs. The programs also included minimum fish sizes, possession limits, and fishing seasons. The averaging of annual harvest estimates is not allowed if the approach is used (i.e. the 1998 based allocations cannot be averaged across multiple years to create new allocations, multi-year averaging can be used to assess management measures).

The Board approved Addendum XVIII in February of 2006. The addendum sought to stabilize fishing rules close to those that existed in 2005, in part, to minimize the drastic reductions that the three states were facing at the time. The addendum allowed the three states (NY, CT, and

MA) facing large reductions in their harvest targets to capitalize on harvest opportunities that are foregone by states that chose to maintain their 2005 recreational fishing rules in 2006.

Addendum XIX, approved in August 2007, broadened the descriptions of stock status determination criteria contained within the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP to allow for greater flexibility in those definitions, while maintaining objective and measurable status determination criteria for identifying when stocks or stock complexes covered by the FMP are overfished. It establishes acceptable categories of peer-review for stock status determination criteria. When these specific peer-review metrics are met and new or updated information is available, the new or revised stock status determination criteria may be incorporated by the Board directly into the annual management measures for each species, rather than requiring a modification to the FMP.

The Board approved Addendum XXV in February of 2014. The addendum implemented regional conservation equivalency for the 2014 fishing year, and sought 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 through regional management. For 2014, the regions were the following: Massachusetts; Rhode Island; Connecticut through New Jersey; Delaware through Virginia; and North Carolina. All states within a region have same minimum size, bag limit, and season length. A continuation of Addendum XXV was codified in Addendum XXVI by the Board in February 2015. Addendum XXVI continued the regional management measures established in 2014 through 2015.

The Board approved Addendum XXVII in February 2016. The addendum addressed 2016 recreational summer flounder and black sea bass fisheries management, continuing regional management measures for 2016 and addressing discrepancies in summer flounder management measures within Delaware Bay. The 2016 recreational fishery was divided into six management regions, the same five regions as under Addendum XXV and XXVI, but with New Jersey separated out from New York and Connecticut into its own region, with states within the same region required to implement the same bag, size limits, and season length. By separating New Jersey into its own region, the addendum allowed the state to make regulations different in Delaware Bay than in the rest of the state. Outside of the Delaware Bay, New Jersey regulations stayed consistent with those in New York and Connecticut. Within the Bay, New Jersey regulations consisted of a similar size limit as in Delaware, the same possession limit as Delaware, and the same season as rest of New Jersey. The line of demarcation for regulation implementation was the COLREGS Demarcation Line. Addendum XXVIII, initiated in 2016, was approved by the Board in February 2017 and seeks to adjust the 30% reduction in the annual RHL from 2016 to 2017 through broad changes to size limits and possession limits across the coast.

II. Status of the Stock

The most recent summer flounder assessment was the June 2016 Stock Assessment Update.

Relative to the biological reference points established during the 2013 benchmark assessment, the stock is not overfished and but overfishing is occurring. Fishing mortality (F) on fully selected age 4 fish ranged between .793 and 1.776 from 1982-1996 and then decreased to .284 in 2007. Since 2007, the fishing mortality has increased to .390 in 2015, 26% above the SAW 57 maximum fishing mortality threshold ($F_{\text{Threshold}} = F_{\text{MSY}} = F_{35\%} = 0.309$).

Spawning stock biomass (SSB) decreased from 55.16 million lbs in 1982 to 15.58 million lbs in 1989 and then increased to peaks of 101.48 million lbs in 2003 and 104.73 million lbs in 2010. SSB was estimated to be 36,240 metric tons (mt) = 79.90 million lbs in 2015, 58% of the biomass target reference point = $SSB_{\text{MSY}} = SSB_{35\%} = 62,394 \text{ mt} = 137.555 \text{ million lbs}$, and 16% above the biomass threshold reference point of $\frac{1}{2} SSB_{\text{MSY}} \text{ proxy} = \frac{1}{2} SSB_{35\%} = 31,197 \text{ mt} = 68.78 \text{ million lb}$. NMFS previously declared the summer flounder stock rebuilt based on the 2011 assessment update, which included stock status determinations using data through 2010. A new rebuilding plan would be triggered in the event that estimated biomass falls below the minimum stock size threshold.

Average recruitment from 1982 to 2015 is 41 million fish at age 0. The 1983 and 1985 year classes are the largest in the assessment time series at 75 and 62 million fish, while the 1988 year class is the smallest at only 10 million fish. The update assessment shows that recruitment of age 0 fish was below the time series average each year from 2010 through 2015. The 2015 year class is estimated to be below average at 23 million fish.

III. Status of the Fishery

Commercial landings peaked in 1984 at 37.77 million lbs, and reached a low of 8.8 million lbs in 1997. From 2005 through present commercial landings have been variable, with two peak years (16.91 million lbs in 2005 and 16.57 million lbs in 2011) that have been followed by steady declines. Over the last five years landings have continued to decline in part due to annual quota limits. From 2012-2014, landings exceeded the commercial coastwide quota. 2015 commercial landings declined to 10.6 million pounds, approximately 96% of the coastwide quota. In 2016, landings further decreased to 7.76 million pounds, once again approximately 96% of the coastwide quota. The principle gear used in the fishery is the otter trawl. Commercial discard losses in the otter trawl and scallop dredge fisheries are estimated from observer data and recently accounted for 5 to 10% of the total commercial catch.

Recreational harvest from 2005 to present have also shown steady declines in part due to declines in the coastwide recreational harvest limit. From 2009 through 2013 harvest was below the recreational harvest limit (RHL); in 2014 coastwide harvest exceeded the RHL by 5% at 7.39 million lbs. In 2015, the coastwide harvest of 4.72 million lbs was significantly lower than previous years despite similar regulations. In 2016, the coastwide harvest increased to 6.42 million lbs, exceeding the RHL by 19%. Recreational discard losses have recently accounted for 15 to 20% of the total catch.

IV. Status of Assessment Advice

The 2016 assessment updates indicates that while catch in recent years has not been substantially over the Acceptable Biological Catch, the projected fishing mortality rates have been exceeded and projected spawning stock biomass has not been achieved. These results appear to be largely driven by poor recruitment, an underestimation of the fishing mortality level in the last years of the assessment, and declining biomass indices. Harvest limits were adjusted for 2016 and beyond to address overfishing.

Biological Reference Points (SSB and F estimates updated by the 2016 Stock Assessment Update)

- F Threshold= $F_{MSY}=F_{35\%} = 0.309$
- Current (2015) $F=0.390$ overfishing is occurring
- Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) threshold = 68.8 million lbs
- SSB target = 137.6 million lbs
- Current SSB (2015) =79.9 million lbs stock is not overfished

V. Status of Research and Monitoring

Several states and NMFS conduct seasonal sampling cruises using an otter trawl to assess the condition of summer flounder populations inshore and in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Massachusetts collects sex and maturity samples and local abundance indices from spring and fall otter trawl surveys, as well as young of the year information in its winter flounder juvenile seine survey. The Commonwealth monitored the commercial fishery through the observation of six directed trawl fishery trips, as well as through dealer Integrated Voice Response (IVR) systems and mandatory fishermen's logbook. Rhode Island monitors the commercial quota for summer flounder using an automated IVR system and dealers are required to provide weekly reports through the IVR of summer flounder landings. Connecticut commercial summer flounder landings are monitored through monthly commercial fishermen logbooks, and weekly and monthly dealer reports. These reports contain daily records of fishing and dealer purchase activity. New York conducts a survey of recreational anglers on open boats throughout the marine district to collect additional data on size composition of kept and discarded fish and also conducts a small mesh otter trawl survey in the Peconic Bays that samples summer flounder. New York requires trip level reporting from all of its commercial fishermen and monitors quota through a combination of trip reports and dealer reports. New Jersey collects data from the commercial trawl fishery and conducts an ocean trawl survey from which data on summer flounder are collected and catch-per-unit-of-effort and distribution information are generated for juveniles and adults. Delaware's commercial landings are monitored through a mandatory monthly harvest report from all state-licensed fishermen. Maryland constructs a juvenile index from trawl data collected in the ocean side bays and is also compiling data on population age, sex, and size from summer flounder taken in pound nets. A statewide voluntary angler survey is conducted that records location, time spent fishing, number of fish caught, number kept, and lengths of the first 20 fish caught. Virginia prepares a young-of-the-year index from data collected from beach seine and trawl surveys. North Carolina conducts two otter trawl surveys for juvenile fluke and collects information on age and growth and catch-per-unit-of-effort for

the winter trawl fishery, estuarine gill net fishery, pound net fishery, the ocean gill net fishery, commercial gig, and the long haul seine fishery.

VI. Status of Management Measures and Issues

Management measures imposed upon harvesters of summer flounder include an annual commercial quota and recreational harvest limit, minimum sizes, minimum mesh requirements for trawls, permits and administrative fees for dealers and vessels, a moratorium on entry into the fishery, mandated use of sea samplers, monitoring of sea turtles in the southern part of the management unit, and collection of data and record keeping by dealers and processors. Fishing mortality has been controlled by a Total Allowable Landings (TAL) since 1983, allocated into a commercial quota (60% of the TAL) and a recreational harvest limit (40% of the TAL). The commercial quota is allocated to each state based on landings during a baseline period (1980-1989), and any overages are subtracted from a state's quota for the following year. The state allocations of the commercial quota are included in Table 1.

Summer Flounder Compliance Criteria

The PRT found no compliance issues.

De Minimis

Delaware requests *de minimis* status. The PRT notes that they meet the requirement of *de minimis*.

COMMERCIAL FISHERY

The following measures may change annually. The 2016 measures are indicated.

Minimum size: 14"

Minimum mesh and threshold: 5.5" diamond, 6" square

Thresholds: 200 lbs in the winter (Nov 1-Apr 30) and 100 lb in the summer (May 1-October 31)

Regulation of mesh beyond the codend: 5.5" diamond or 6" square throughout the mesh

2016 Commercial quota: 8.12 million pounds

The following measures are not subject to annual adjustment.

Quota management provisions: States are required to adopt appropriate measures to manage their quota shares. States may transfer or combine their quota shares as specified in Amendment 5. States must document through a vessel and dealer reporting system all landings that are not otherwise included in the federal monitoring of permit holders. States are required to forward all landings information to the NMFS for inclusion in quota reporting.

Transfer at Sea: States must prohibit permitted summer flounder vessels from transferring summer flounder from one vessel to another at sea. (As specified in Amendment 10)

De minimis status: States having commercial landings less than 0.1% of the coastwide total will be eligible for *de minimis* status. (As specified in Amendment 10). Delaware has requested *de minimis* status and meets the requirements.

RECREATIONAL FISHERY

The Management Board chose to adopt regional management through conservation equivalency for the 2016 recreational fishery under the provisions of Framework 2 (see table 3 for state measures). As such, the Federal recreational bag limit and minimum fish size were waived and the fishing season and vessel owners were subject only to the regulations in their states.

2016 recreational harvest limit: 5.42 million lbs.

OTHER MEASURES

Filet at sea permit: Party or charter vessels in state waters will be allowed to filet at sea if they obtain a state issued permit allowing such activity. (As specified in Amendment 10)

Reporting:

1. States must submit a commercial fishery management proposal by October 1 of each year. The proposal must detail the specific management measures that the state intends to use to manage their commercial quota allocation. The proposal must be reviewed and approved by the Management Board.
2. States must submit an annual compliance report to the Chairman of the Summer Flounder Plan Review Team by June 1 of each year. The report must detail the state's management program for the current year and establish proof of compliance with all mandatory management measures and all framework changes specified for the current year. It should include landings information from the previous year, and the results of any monitoring or research program.

This summary of compliance criteria is intended to serve as a quick reference guide. It in no way alters or supersedes compliance criteria as contained in the Summer Flounder FMP and Amendments thereto.

VI. Current State-by-State Implementation of FMP Requirements

The PRT notes that after reviewing state compliance reports, all states are compliant with the FMP requirements. The PRT does note that moving forward, state compliance reports should be adjusted in the following three ways:

- 1) Better language indicating whether all FMP requirements have been implemented, and if not applicable, for them to be noted up front. Many state compliance reports do indicate this clearly.
- 2) Move a more standardized format of indicating changes to current and future management measures as reflected in state regulations. Many states include more regulatory information than is needed.
- 3) Landings and survey indices information should be submitted in an excel spreadsheet and compliance reports should be submitted in word documents; this does not preclude a state from including current table or figure of this information, but without the data in a more accessible format, it creates additional work to remove confidential data and update other management documents.

1993 - 2016 Summer Flounder FMP Compliance Schedule

COMMERCIAL:

14" minimum size	3/1/97
5.5" codend mesh	1/1/98
Ability to regulate mesh in any portion of the net	1/1/98
5.5" diamond or 6" square mesh, body	6/3/98
Prohibition of transfer at sea	1/1/98
Mandatory reporting to NMFS of landings from state waters	1/1/98
Small mesh exemption program	1/21/93
Flynet minimum mesh size exemption	1/21/93

RECREATIONAL:

Regional Management Measures under conservation equivalency	2/2016
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GENERAL

Submission of annual commercial management plan thereafter	10/1/97,	annually
Submission of annual landings and compliance report thereafter	6/1/98,	annually

Table 1. State by state allocation for annual commercial quota

State	Allocation (%)
Maine	0.04756%
New Hampshire	0.00046%
Massachusetts	6.82046%
Rhode Island	15.68298%
Connecticut	2.25708%
New York	7.64699%
New Jersey	16.72499%
Delaware	0.01779%
Maryland	2.03910%
Virginia	21.31676%
North Carolina	27.44584%
Total	100%

Table 1. Summer Flounder Commercial Landings by State (2006-2016) in pounds.

Source: ACCSP. 2016. Commercial Landings Summaries (Dealer Reports) – Non-confidential; generated by J.Kuesel; using ACCSP Data Warehouse, Arlington, VA. & State Compliance Reports (2017)

State	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016**
MA	920,549	659,784	644,404	731,174	851,889	1,132,192	891,495	859,150	694,777	748,433	585,637
RI	2,122,528	1,515,684	1,473,439	1,793,891	2,289,379	2,824,032	2,064,076	1,799,394	2,054,951	1,716,095	1,303,001
CT	316,533	205,115	220,510	256,768	308,341	401,377	298,849	280,652	253,442	286,890	185,592
NY	1,219,842	929,132	832,415	1,119,093	1,330,015	1,483,785	1,237,126	999,206	833,577	829,929	602,527
NJ	2,379,733	1,697,472	1,540,811	1,798,903	2,165,325	2,830,686	2,268,793	1,995,298	1,826,455	1,681,962	1,294,308
DE	4,376	2,261	1,213	2,952	1,858	836	677	913	1,687	1,349	2,236
MD	247,743	228,809	208,219	213,564	263,302	259,392	139,824	165,134	164,384	187,811	158,970
VA	2,756,952	1,853,693	1,651,575	1,978,754	2,589,786	4,050,998	4,111,708	4,868,842	2,049,045	2,273,593	1,560,927
NC	3,981,430	2,670,122	2,406,611	2,859,048	6,622,004	5,708,254	1,087,427	543,247	2,906,789	2,878,753	2,066,026
Total	13,949,754	9,774,075	9,002,613	10,774,754	16,455,427	18,724,801	11,801,702	11,511,836	10,785,107	10,601,633	7,759,224

**2016 Landings are preliminary.

Table 2. Recreational Summer Flounder Harvest by State (2006-2016) in weight (pounds).

Source: "Personal Communication with National Marine Fisheries Service, Statistics Division September 2017"

State	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
MA	608,499	368,084	635,196	121,120	137,611	202,665	175,110	64,365	238,604	146,532	124,411
RI	783,010	553,056	831,062	348,603	458,873	511,544	335,506	372,672	636,207	600,597	269,412
CT	424,539	371,907	567,132	195,883	132,013	186,834	191,119	888,906	391,168	337,194	678,479
NY	2,343,908	3,249,126	2,738,108	1,449,759	1,612,298	1,718,121	1,760,650	1,954,821	1,668,848	1,569,139	2,281,086
NJ	3,860,756	2,727,838	2,113,217	2,466,799	1,614,357	2,116,951	3,063,723	3,286,543	3,608,939	1,442,827	2,323,874
DE	247,811	330,307	147,895	259,169	159,976	182,733	141,935	159,185	227,913	114,638	230,925
MD	71,625	206,522	169,323	168,025	91,834	55,686	61,514	108,690	179,313	103,613	52,303
VA	2,005,412	1,311,429	883,168	917,153	789,856	880,639	658,476	449,002	370,230	342,545	191,555
NC	156,842	218,441	64,571	103,867	111,539	100,543	101,642	70,874	67,791	64,065	30,355
Total	10,502,402	9,336,710	8,149,672	6,030,378	5,108,357	5,955,716	6,489,675	7,355,058	7,389,013	4,721,150	6,057,989

Table 3. 2016 recreational management measures for summer flounder by state.

State	Minimum Size (inches)	Possession Limit	Open Season
Massachusetts	16	5 fish	May 22-September 23
Rhode Island	18	8 fish	May 1-December 31
Connecticut	18	5 fish	May 17- September 21
CT shore program (46 designed shore sites)	16		
New York	18	5 fish	May 17- September 21
New Jersey*	18	5 fish	May 21- September 25
NJ Shore program site (ISBSP)	16	2 fish	May 21-September 25
New Jersey/Delaware Bay COLREGS**	17	4 fish	May 21-September 25
Delaware	16	4 fish	January 1- December 31
Maryland	16	4 fish	January 1- December 31
PRFC	16	4 fish	January 1- December 31
Virginia	16	4 fish	January 1- December 31
North Carolina	15	6 fish	January 1- December 31

*New Jersey east of the COLREGS line at Cape May, NJ will have management measures consistent with the northern region of Connecticut – New York.

**New Jersey west of the COLREGS line at Cape May, NJ inside Delaware Bay will have a similar size limit to the southern region (DE-VA), the same possession limit as the southern region (DE-VA), and the same season length as the northern region of Connecticut – New York.

Table 4. 2017 recreational management measures for summer flounder by state.

State	Minimum Size (inches)	Possession Limit	Open Season
Massachusetts	17	4 fish	May 22-September 23
Rhode Island	19	4 fish	May 1-December 31
Connecticut*	19	3 fish	May 17-September 21
*At 41 designated shore sites	17		
New York	19	3 fish	May 17-September 21
New Jersey*	18	3 fish	May 25-September 5
*NJ Pilot shore program 1 site	16	2 fish	May 25-September 5
New Jersey/Delaware Bay COLREGS**	17	3 fish	May 25-September 5
Delaware	17	4 fish	All year
Maryland	17	4 fish	All year
PRFC	17	4 fish	All year
Virginia	17	4 fish	All year
North Carolina	15	4 fish	All Year

*New Jersey east of the COLREGS line at Cape May, NJ will have management measures consistent with the northern region of Connecticut – New York.

**New Jersey west of the COLREGS line at Cape May, NJ inside Delaware Bay will have a similar size limit to the southern region (DE-VA), the same possession limit as the southern region (DE-VA), and the same season length as the northern region of Connecticut – New York.