



## Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Performance Report June 2023

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (Council's) Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Advisory Panel (AP) met jointly with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (Commission's) Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass AP on June 21, 2023 to review the Fishery Information Documents and develop the following Fishery Performance Report for all three species. The primary purpose of this report is to contextualize catch histories for the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) by providing information about fishing effort, market trends, environmental changes, and other factors.

Please note: Advisor comments described below are not necessarily consensus or majority statements.

Additional comments provided by advisors via email are attached to this document but are not incorporated into the summary below.

**Council Advisory Panel members present:** Katie Almeida (MA), Carl Benson (NJ), Joan Berko (NJ), Frank Blount (RI)\*, Eric Burnley (DE), Joseph Devito (NY), James Fletcher (NC), Jeremy Hancher (PA), Victor Hartley (NJ), Greg Hueth (NJ), Bob Pride (VA), George Topping (MD), Mike Waine (NC), Harvey Yenkinson (PA)

**Commission Advisory Panel members present:** Frank Blount (RI)\*, Phil Michaud (MA), Bill Shillingford (NJ)

\*These individuals serve on both the Council and Commission APs.

**Others present:** Chris Batsavage, Tracey Bauer, Julia Beaty, John Boreman, Haley Clinton, Sarah Cvach, Kiley Dancy, Jason Didden, Steve Doctor, Michelle Duval, Mark Grant, Hannah Hart, Mark Holliday, Jesse Hornstein, José Montañez, Adam Nowalsky, Phil Simon, Chelsea Tuohy, two unidentified participants via phone only.

### Discussion questions

1. What factors influenced recent catch (markets/economy, environment, regulations, other factors)?
2. Are the current fishery regulations appropriate? How could they be improved?
3. What would you recommend as research priorities?
4. What else is important for the Council to know?

## **Summer Flounder**

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### ***Fishery Performance***

One advisor said he appreciated the Overfishing Limit (OFL) and Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC) performance information in the Fishery Information Documents and presentation this year. He asked whether it's typical for catch to be approximately 30% below the OFL on a regular basis. Staff said several factors impact how close catch gets to the OFL, including the buffer between the OFL and the ABC and the fishery performance relative to the ABC. The buffer between the OFL and ABC for summer flounder is larger than it is for scup and black sea bass due to summer flounder stock status. The commercial and recreational fisheries have each been below their respective ACLs in most or all recent years. These underages could be driven by a combination of factors including regulations, other drivers of effort, and/or availability.

This advisor requested the addition of fishing mortality or F/Fmsy estimates to the table once the new assessment is available. He also said he struggles to understand the conservation need for leaving such a large underage on the table, especially for the recreational sector. He questioned whether the information reviewed by and provided by advisors was meant to check a box or if it could be used to improve management and provide more fishing access.

### ***Stock Availability and Trends***

Another advisor suggested that catch is so far under the limits because the fishery is controlling itself, in that the fish are less available and therefore landings are down. While he appreciates that regulations for summer flounder have gotten less restrictive, he thought it would be better to tighten the regulations for summer flounder while loosening them for scup and black sea bass, which have frequent overages because they are so abundant. He noted that fishermen are still catching a lot of summer flounder, but most of them are not keepers, and that harvest is way down due to low availability of larger fish.

Another advisor agreed that the summer flounder stock may not be as robust as we think. He noted that given underages of the catch limits for so many years, we would expect more stock growth than we are currently seeing. He thought part of that was due to low recruitment, but questioned whether part of it could also be that the stock's natural mortality is higher than we are assuming.

A commercial advisor mentioned that he fishes for horseshoe crabs, and normally this time of year they would be catching one or two flounders per tow. This year, they are noting many more smaller 16-20 inch flounders being caught, up to 50-70 pounds per tow. One advisor said he heard that the NEAMAP survey bottom temperature observations are 6-10 degrees colder than the last 20 years, impacting the seasonal availability of target species. From his perspective, this year everything seems to be running about two weeks behind schedule in terms of where and when they would usually find certain species.

Another advisor connected this comment to the "Squid Squad," which is a scientist and industry partnership group that meets weekly to discuss oceanographic conditions and correlate them to patterns observed in the *Illex* squid fishery. She suggested it may be worth trying to conduct a similar exercise for the summer flounder fishery.

### ***Market/Economic Conditions and Commercial Fishery Issues***

One advisor noted that industry members at the Town Dock (out of Rhode Island) have reported terrible market prices this year. Industry members did not mention possible drivers of the low market prices, but this advisor said she could inquire further.

Another advisor also noted very low prices for summer flounder, as low as \$0.46 per pound recently in Maryland. This, in combination with high fuel costs, has resulted in a decrease in fishing activity. It is not worth spending \$10,000 to \$15,000 on trip costs to catch \$5,000 worth of fish.

A commercial fisherman from Massachusetts noted that in the last 3-5 years he has seen mostly medium size fluke and very few large and jumbos. The medium fish at approximately 16-18 inches shoot through the 6.5-inch codends they are using, so summer flounder are not caught very efficiently using that size mesh. However, this year, he is now seeing many large and jumbos which is exciting, although it's not clear why this is happening.

### ***Recreational Fishery Issues***

Two advisors commented on the recreational slot limit in New Jersey (two fish allowed at 17-17.99 inches and one fish above 18 inches). One advisor shared his concerns that it has not been successful in lowering the harvest of female fish in the recreational fishery. Based on his observations, less than 5% of harvest is male. Another advisor expressed his support for the slot limit regulations, but thought they should be modified to either a single slot, or two slot limits with one fish allowed in each. This advisor also supported further discussions on sector separation for the for-hire sector.

### ***Research Recommendations***

One advisor emphasized the importance of understanding why the center of biomass is shifting north. His perspective is that the oceanographic data (such as temperature and pH) do not explain the magnitude of this shift, because the changes are well within the preferred habitat parameters of summer flounder. If this movement continues, it will have series implications for both the commercial and recreational fisheries, so the drivers of distribution changes should be better understood. He believes it is related to asymmetric fishing pressure along the coast. He also supports prioritizing research into why summer flounder recruitment has been below average.

This advisor also expressed concern that we don't know as much as we should about the migration patterns of summer flounder beyond a general East-West pattern. Finally, this advisor recommended that we find better ways to conduct population surveys than trawl surveys, which disturb fish and their habitat and kill a lot of fish. Newer and better technology may exist to conduct surveys without killing the fish and destroying vulnerable habitats.

## **Scup**

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### ***Stock Availability and Trends***

Multiple advisors suggested that the overages in scup catch were likely due to the abundance of the stock, contrasting this with summer flounder which has underages and lower availability. One advisor said we are overregulating the fishery and the current management system seems

backwards. This advisor recommended loosening regulations for abundant stocks, like scup and black sea bass, and tightening regulations for the less abundant stocks, like summer flounder.

### ***Market/Economic Conditions and Commercial Fishery Issues***

One advisor noted that he could viably target scup if he used a smaller codend and if regulations allowed the fishery to operate during the night. The advisor said scup are plentiful in certain areas around Massachusetts but the lack of a market for scup discourages him from targeting the species.

### ***Recreational Fishery Performance and Fishery Issues***

Some advisors questioned the significant increase in recreational scup catch and expressed disbelief in MRIP estimates. One advisor noted he is not trying to pick on MRIP, but questioned where this significant increase in scup catch is coming from, and questioned if it was from that 2015-year-class or other factors. One advisor noted that if over 17 million scup were landed last year, then we should be seeing that level of catch come to shore and questioned if state agencies, especially New York, are seeing that level of scup harvest. The advisor also noted that it is hard to believe that the amount of scup harvest coming out of New York alone is greater than the entire coastwide harvest of summer flounder. The advisor expressed the need to get a better understanding of scup harvest and questioned if other AP members were seeing this level of catch on the water. One advisor noted that headboats out of New York are catching large quantities of scup but was unsure if it was as high as the level estimated through MRIP. Another advisor noted that he has not experienced the level of scup harvest estimated through MRIP out of New Jersey and said for-hire boats were not regularly catching scup last year until around August/September and scup catch dropped off significantly in the late fall.

Several advisors voiced frustration with the 2023 recreational scup season in New Jersey and felt the August 1 start date was too restrictive and unfair given neighboring states are opening their season several months prior. One advisor emphasized that New Jersey's recreational landings constitutes such a small percentage of the total coastwide harvest, making the late start date seem disproportionate. Some advisors said the late New Jersey start date was particularly damaging to the for-hire industry given scup has been an important target species early in the year. One advisor expressed concern about the ripple effect the restrictive regulations will have on businesses beyond the for-hire sector, such as tackle shops and marinas. Another advisor questioned the rationale behind connecting scup and black sea bass in determining New Jersey's regulations and advocated for better alignment with regulations in other states.

Two advisors stressed the importance of keeping scup open year-round for the for-hire sector, especially for those not targeting summer flounder or during black sea bass closures. These advisors requested recreational sector separation to ensure continued fishing opportunities for for-hire boats. One for-hire advisor also noted the importance of keeping scup open in New Jersey due to the decline in ling (red hake) catch.

## **Black Sea Bass**

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### ***Recreational Fishery Issues***

One advisor noted that Rhode Island has more restrictive recreational black sea bass measures than most other states. He noted that uniform proportional reductions in harvest across all states have been normalized in recent years, but are especially hard on states with the most restrictive measures

to start with. He said it feels like some states are being penalized for conservation measures taken in the past. He appreciated that the for-hire sector in Rhode Island and Connecticut didn't need to take another big cut this year, but they are currently operating under a very restrictive two fish possession limit.

Another advisor who fishes out of southern New Jersey cautioned against liberalizing measures to allow increased harvest of black sea bass given that stock assessment is not a perfect science. He said fisheries for other species have been lost after having very high abundance. He said it's nice for anglers to be able to catch black sea bass every time they go out, unlike summer flounder, which only the best fishermen tend to catch. He recommended managing the black sea bass stock for continued high abundance.

A for-hire captain based in New Jersey disagreed and said it feels like the recreational black sea bass fishery is continually penalized despite the robustness of the stock. He said the for-hire sector needs to be managed separately from the private recreational sector, noting that for-hire catch can be tracked with vessel trip reports. He hoped implementing separate management would lead to more favorable open seasons for the for-hire sector, enabling them to increase their income. He expressed concern about reduced fishing opportunities for striped bass due to recent actions taken by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. He hoped that black sea bass could have a longer open season given that they are so abundant.

Another recreational fishing advisor disagreed with the previous recommendation to manage for abundance and expressed concern that management may miss an opportunity to take advantage of the currently high biomass given that it is declining from a peak. He noted that past high year classes are phasing out of the biomass and stock dynamics are not just driven by the fishery, but are also impacted by environmental factors. He recommended that the fisheries be allowed to take advantage of this high biomass, especially given that black sea bass is a food fish, as opposed to some other species which have a greater catch and release component to the recreational fisheries. He also noted that the stock assessment does not assume a relationship between stock size and recruitment; therefore, being more conservative than necessary now may not lead to increased biomass in the future. He added that the currently restrictive regulations feel very disconnected from the high biomass.

Another recreational fishing advisor from New Jersey noted that the black sea bass stock was rebuilt under much higher possession limits and much smaller minimum sizes than the current measures. He noted that the recreational minimum size in New Jersey decreased from 13 to 12.5 inches in 2023, which helped reduce discards. Anglers didn't have to fish as long or discard as many fish before they caught a keeper compared to in 2022 under the higher minimum size limit.

Another recreational fishery advisor from Delaware recommended consideration of lowering the minimum fish size to 12.5 inches in additional states to achieve similar benefits as previously described (i.e., reduce discards, achieve the possession limit faster, and end the fishing day sooner).

A recreational fishery advisor from Rhode Island expressed concern about previous comments related to high abundance and restrictive regulations. He reminded the group that the regulations are so restrictive because black sea bass are so easy to catch. If the regulations were less restrictive, the recent recreational overages would be even greater. He said when abundance is high, effort also increases. He added that he did not disagree with the recommendations for sector separation,

but struggled to understand what other changes advisors had in mind when they suggested regulations should be less restrictive due to high biomass.

One commercial fishery advisor said all recreational fishermen should be required to report their catches through a cell phone application. He also recommended that the recreational fishery be managed with a total cumulative length limit (i.e., all fish are retained until the combined length of those fish adds up to a specified limit), a prohibition on discards, and larger hook sizes.

### ***Market/Economic Issues***

One recreational fishing advisor from New Jersey said the continued restrictions on black sea bass hurt the economy. For example, they impact support businesses such as fuel dealers in addition to impacting fishermen.

### ***Commercial Fishery Issues***

One advisor speaking from the recreational fishing perspective said management should reward fisheries with lower bycatch. He noted that a previous analysis, not presented during this meeting, showed an increasing proportion of commercial landings from trawl gear. He noted that trawl gear has much higher levels of dead discards than pots/traps.

Another recreational fishing advisor recommended consideration of separate quotas for trawl and pot/trap commercial fisheries.

## **General Comments on AP Participation and Input**

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The topic of attendance came up and it was noted that about 12 out of 24 Council AP members were present and 3 out of 31 were present for the Commission. This generated some discussion about AP participation and the process of seeking advisor input.

One advisor asked for additional guidance on what information from advisors would be the most useful to contribute to the decision-making process. This advisor thought the input is solicited late in the process, and also expressed concern that the new data expected after this meeting negates the AP input almost automatically. He suggested thinking about how to get advisor input into the system earlier, for example, by using an online form that advisors could respond to earlier in the year. Then, during this meeting to develop Fishery Performance Reports, advisors would have more ideas and information to react to provided by other advisors. This advisor would like to find ways to encourage advisors to talk more and engage in more meaningful discussions.

Several advisors supported occasional in-person AP meetings, while acknowledging that not everyone would be able to travel to these meetings. In-person meetings would likely get better participation if held earlier in the year, in late winter or spring. For webinar meetings, evenings may work better for many advisors. One AP member also suggested breaking the species up into separate meetings to potentially give more people an opportunity to participate and to lower the time commitment for an individual meeting.

One advisor suggested that providing more information about each advisors' background, for example on the website, would be helpful for increased awareness about where other advisors are coming from and provide information to the public on who may be helpful to call if they have feedback on the topic. Others suggested that casual pre-meeting calls or email threads between individual advisors can be helpful for preparing for the meetings.

## Public Comments

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One individual who is on other Council Advisory Panels, but not this Advisory Panel, noted that the tables shown in the presentation suggest a pattern of increasing commercial landings and stable recreational landings, with increasing overall dead catch for all three species. He said this trend needs to be addressed. He noted that there were major revisions to the recreational fishing data to address previous issues which were identified as fatal flaws; however, the new data is not much of an improvement. He thought a closer look at the estimation methodology is warranted. Perhaps effort is over-estimated.

This individual also noted that although the staff presentations showed evidence of poor recruitment in some recent years, the number of juvenile summer flounder and black sea bass in estuaries has not declined, suggesting that preservation of female fish has not been an issue. Survival of juveniles in estuaries should be given greater attention. For example, research could focus on oxygen levels, prey availability, and other factors influencing survival in estuaries. This individual also agreed with previous comments about catch being reflective of stock status. He noted that the recreational summer flounder fishery is not doing well this year and the recreational measures should be re-evaluated, for example to allow a longer open season under lower possession limits.

## Additional AP Comments Provided Outside of the Meeting

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### *Steve Witthuhn*

Comments provided to Council staff over the phone in June and July 2023.

- **General comments**
  - The June 2023 Advisory Panel meeting took place during a busy time of year for fishing.
  - The Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) data are flawed and inaccurate.
  - Recreational fishermen are so frustrated with the restrictive regulations that they don't care anymore and are not complying with the regulations. This is especially true for black sea bass given the stock is so abundant.
  - Recreational anglers are concerned that discards will count against them.
  - Fishing reports sometimes embellish the amount of fish caught. This is problematic and could have unintended consequences if it's used against fishermen.
  - Regulations should be more consistent across states. For example, Connecticut and the north shore of Long Island should be treated as a region with the same regulations. Summer flounder and tautog have the same measures for New York and Connecticut in Long Island Sound. The same approach should be used for black sea bass and other species as well.
  - The recreational fishery is not catching many summer flounder because biomass is low. Those regulations remain unchanged. In contrast, black sea bass catch is high because that stock is more than double the target level. Those regulations are being restricted. This makes it feel like the recreational fishery is being penalized for catching more and rewarded for catching less.

- Fuel prices are still decent.
- Young people aren't getting involved in the fisheries and they aren't getting involved in the management process, including on the Advisory Panels.
- With climate change, we are seeing more southern species such as cobia and triggerfish. Triggerfish are almost a targeted species now.
- **For-hire sector**
  - The overall attitude in the for-hire sector has changed. People are very frustrated and fed up with management. This increases non-compliance.
  - The for-hire regulations need to allow customers to take home some fish. Customers are catching lots of fish, but aren't able to take any home due to the size limits.
  - A full day charter costs a lot of money. Customers want to have a good day on the water catching fish and they also want something to take home.
  - If you see a party boat that's always full of people, it's because they are taking something home.
  - Management should consider for-hire boat limits. For example, a limit of three striped bass per charter boat would allow each of the six customers to take home one fillet.
  - I'm not doing many for-hire trips yet because the black sea bass season isn't open yet. We can't catch as many striped bass under the new regulations. Fluke availability is down, and people don't want to eat bluefish.
  - Another advisor has suggested a cumulative length limit as a way to reduce discards. That has some similarities to what we are already doing for striped bass and black sea bass. When we get our limit, we stop fishing for that species and move on to something else.
- **Black sea bass**
  - Recreational fishermen in New York are very upset by the increase in the black sea bass minimum fish size to 16.5 inches. This will result in very high discards and less fish to take home. The minimum size used to be 14 inches. How is management doing a good job if the minimum size keeps increasing?
  - The 16.5 inch minimum size and the late start to the recreational black sea bass season will lead to increased non-compliance. We're already seeing lots of bad behavior. People not waiting for black sea bass to open. The fluke season started out bad. The only thing we're catching is black sea bass, so people are keeping them so their customers can take something home. This is not a good way to run a business.
  - It is frustrating that the for-hire sector wasn't able to keep a 16 inch minimum size this year, but we were told we'd have to open in July to allow that.
  - In the past, black sea bass has bailed me out. Now the for-hire season in New York doesn't open until June 23.
  - The three fish recreational possession limit at the start of the season in New York is something, but it is frustrating that the minimum size had to increase to 16.5 inches to allow this.
  - It is frustrating that New York has more restrictive recreational measures than neighboring states. New Jersey has a much smaller minimum size than New York and has four different seasons throughout the year. How was New Jersey able to get this through? Connecticut has a 16 inch minimum size. People are aware of this and are frustrated. Neighboring states should have the same measures.



- The black sea bass commercial season opens way before the recreational season. Recreational fishermen complain that all the commercial pinhookers catch all the black sea bass. The commercial sector gets a better price for big fish. The recreational fishermen are concerned that they'll only get the small throw backs, which are below the recreational minimum size of 16.5 inches.
- In the commercial fishery, jumbo black sea bass (3-4 pounds) go for the highest prices, but they are hard to find.
- It is disappointing that the black sea bass research track assessment peer review has been delayed. Do we need to dedicate more funding to this assessment to help it get done well and on time?
- **Summer flounder**
  - This is one of the worst years so far for fluke.
  - I heard there was a good body of fluke that moved north to Massachusetts before they could be caught off New York. My contacts in the commercial fishery are also saying the market is getting fluke from Massachusetts. I've heard they are catching shorts in Massachusetts and we're not getting shorts in New York.
  - The price for fluke in New York was higher this year, but no one was catching them.
- **Scup**
  - The commercial ex-vessel price for scup has decreased.
- **Bluefish**
  - There's a very large body of bluefish off Montauk. They are feeding on squid, herring, anchovy, and sand eels. It's surprising that we had such a good sand eel hatch with the mild winter.
  - This is the best start to a bluefish season I've ever seen. There were 8-12 pound bluefish in May. That keeps us busy. Tackle shops like that. Bluefish bite off tackle.
  - How old is a 10 pound bluefish? What size are the spawners that we want to save?
  - There used to be snapper derbies for bluefish. There haven't been enough snappers recently for those derbies to come back.
  - The bag limit changes for bluefish have been helpful for the for-hire sector.
  - The bluefish price is down to \$0.40 per pound, which is extremely low. It should be more like \$1.00 per pound. Shipping a box of bluefish costs more than the price we are paid for the fish in the box.
  - The low price is contributing to landings falling below the quota.
  - The commercial possession limit for bluefish in New York should not have been increased from 500 to 1,500 pounds. It should have stayed lower to help improve the price.
- **Striped bass**
  - The additional black sea bass restrictions are happening at the same time as the emergency ruling for striped bass, which changed the slot limit to 28-31 inches. This is a big blow to the recreational fishery. It will also increase discards.
  - It is frustrating that management did not act more proactively to prevent the need for emergency striped bass measures. Managers should have foreseen this situation with the 2015 year class. There had been a downward trend for four years and then the MRIP estimate for 2022 showed extremely high harvest. It's not an emergency, it's a failure of the whole system and the recreational fishing industry has to pay the price.

- All states should have similar measures to help rebuild the stock. It does not make sense for one state to keep their trophy fish when others could not. Trophy fish should only be allowed if there's an upward trend in the stock.
- The fishery should be closed during spawning to help with rebuilding.
- It would have been better to keep the for-hire sector at their previous slot limit and further restrict the private recreational sector given that they are responsible for most of the discard mortality.
- A few states opened their commercial striped bass fishery, which caused a decrease in the price in New York.
- There have been more striped bass in federal waters recently.
- Night fishing increases the catch of large fish. Even with catch and release, there are still concerns about discard mortality.
- Restrictions could be considered to prohibit taking big fish out of the water, as is done for tarpon. If people want to take a picture before they release the fish, they should keep the fish in the water.

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***Bonnie Brady***

Comments provided to Council staff in June 2023.

- The biggest issue last year were horrible prices.

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***Joan Berko***

**From:** fishthewizard (null)

**To:** Beaty, Julia

**Subject:** AP meeting

**Date:** Wednesday, June 21, 2023 4:51:28 PM

Hi Julia:

I had trouble getting sound with my Mac so used my Ipad. Logged in as JB. Last years BSB prices were low, mostly below \$1 for mediums. The average price of \$2.60 sounds high. Fuel averaged well over \$4.

Joan Berko

Sent from my iPad

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*James Fletcher*

**From:** [James Fletcher](#)  
**To:** [Beaty, Julia](#); [Hart, Hannah](#); [Andrew Petersen](#)  
**Subject:** Re: INFORMATION FOR 21 DISCUSSION  
**Date:** Thursday, June 22, 2023 5:27:54 PM

Because my comment could not be included::: I Believe BOFFFF (BIG OLD FAT FECUND FEMALE FISH "SCIENCE" IS IGNORED FOR ALL THREE SPECIES! Management & NMF Science by allowing by catch has INTENTIONALLY destroyed the genetic superior breeding fish. A policy for recreational KEEP WHAT YOU CATCH with hook size regulations would have allowed the deprived shore side recreational fishers food to take home & enjoyment from recreational fishing.

A policy / regulatory consideration for total length retention SHOULD BE A PART OF THE A.P. REPORT !

also cell phone for recreational **MUST BE IMPLEMENTED! BLUEFIN DATA HAS SYSTEM FOR CELL PHONE REPORTING! PLEASE NOTE IN REPORT!**

CALL BLUFFIN AT (225-407-9192 TO CONFIRM APPLICATION IS AVAILABLE  
**PLEASE NOTE IN REPORT!**

On 6/22/2023 2:46 PM, Beaty, Julia wrote:

Hi James,

I reached out to my coworker Tori for help with this question. I am not sure if you've interacted with Tori much yet. She has a strong background in spatial analysis. See below for her calculations of rough estimates of the area covered by several surveys.

Julia Beaty  
Fishery Management Specialist  
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council 800  
N. State Street, Suite 201  
Dover, DE 19901  
302-526-5250  
[jbeaty@mafmc.org](mailto:jbeaty@mafmc.org) Pronouns:  
She/her/hers

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**From:** Kentner, Tori <[tkentner@mafmc.org](mailto:tkentner@mafmc.org)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 21, 2023 5:17 PM **To:**  
Beaty, Julia <[jbeaty@mafmc.org](mailto:jbeaty@mafmc.org)>  
**Cc:** Didden, Jason <[jdidden@mafmc.org](mailto:jdidden@mafmc.org)>; Moore, Christopher <[cmoore@mafmc.org](mailto:cmoore@mafmc.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: INFORMATION FOR 21 DISCUSSION

Hi Julia,

I don't have shapefiles for the NEAMAP strata or any of the state surveys on hand. I'm not even sure if strata shapefiles exist for most surveys. Despite extensive searching

online I couldn't come up with any official resources. As a solution I applied a method called concave hull analysis to draw polygons around the survey points for each trawl, creating an initial shapefile. From this, I've estimated the areas in square nautical miles.

Just want to stress this is a very rough estimate and for a more precise picture I'd recommend reaching out to NEAMAP or the state agencies directly. I'm actually planning on doing this for the EFH analysis, but I probably won't get responses for at least a few weeks/months. I can update this list at that time if there is still interest.

Tori

Survey	NM SQ
NEAMAP Bottom Trawl	3,500
Maine-New Hampshire Inshore Trawl	5,200
New Jersey Ocean Stock Assessment	1,900
Connecticut Long Island Sound Trawl	750
Massachusetts Bottom Trawl	1,700
Rhode Island Narragansett Bay Trawl	225

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-----Original Message-----

From: James Fletcher <[unfa34@gmail.com](mailto:unfa34@gmail.com)>

Sent: Tuesday, June 20, 2023 10:56 AM

To: Beaty, Julia <[jbeaty@mafmc.org](mailto:jbeaty@mafmc.org)>; Moore, Christopher <[cmoore@mafmc.org](mailto:cmoore@mafmc.org)>; Didden, Jason <[jdidden@mafmc.org](mailto:jdidden@mafmc.org)>

Subject: INFORMATION FOR 21 DISCUSSION

I have following (ATTACHED sq MILE ESTIMATE OF NEFSC TRAWL SURVEY sq miles / acres for National Marine Fisheries survey.

Would you attempt to acquire area of NEMAP survey? Then attempt gain State water areas not surveyed?

THE REASON FOR THOUGHT! OUR 11 MILLION TO 18 MILLION ACL OR ANY NUMBER USED \*\*\*\* WOULD ONLY BE A PERCENTAGE OF POUNDS OF FISH PER ACRE.

Knowing if I fish an acre of bottom will catch many times what survey shows. NEED DISCUSSION OF WHAT SCIENCE WE ARE USING.

PLEASE ACQUIRE AREA COVER BY NEMAP. AND STATE WATERS NOT COVERED BY ANY SURVEY, THANK YOU;

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**Carl Benson**

**From:** flukeman@aol.com

**Sent:** Monday, June 26, 2023 12:42 PM

**To:** Beaty, Julia

**Cc:** Kiley Dancy; Hart, Hannah; tbauer@asmfc.org; Chelsea Tuohy; Mark Grant

**Subject:** Re: Briefing materials for June 21 webinar meeting

**Attachments:** FSB\_AP\_21June2023\_Agenda.pdf; Fluke AP FPR Info Doc\_2023.pdf;

Scup\_info\_doc\_2023.pdf;

BSB\_fishery\_info\_doc\_2023.pdf

Thanks for the presentation. I had mic problems with online and phone call in. Convenient that James and I have the problems. (LOL)

The best suggestion I heard was to create a site where advisors could respond to threads that you started. Maybe advisors could also add threads that they wish to discuss.

A comment that could change my priority concerned size of fluke recruitment vs size of fish reaching one year of age. Very interesting comment.

Which method of rebuilding stock is correct? Striped Bass-protect spawning females vs Summer Flounder - harvest females.

Revisit commercial discards (14" was 13"). Commercial discards are counted against total harvest becoming scavenger food vs harvest those fish, becoming people food. These fish would fit well into ethnic markets as whole fish to compete with imports (tilapia, etc).

Thanks

Carl Benson