



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ASMFC Approves 2008 TALs for Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass, and Bluefish

Port Jefferson, NY – The Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) met this week to finalize the total allowable landings (TAL) limits for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish, and to establish 2008 commercial management measures for the respective fisheries. The Commission's actions with regards to summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish are final and apply to state waters. The Council will be forwarding its actions as recommendations to NOAA's Northeast Regional Administrator for final approval. The TALs are provided below in millions of pounds.

Species	2007 ASMFC TAL	2008 TAL
Black Sea Bass	6.5	4.22
Scup	13.5	7.34
Summer Flounder	17.1	15.77
Bluefish	27.8	28.2

The Commission and Council approved a TAL of 15.77 million pounds for the 2008 summer flounder fishery, divided into a 9.46 million pound commercial quota and a 6.31 million pound recreational harvest limit. The approved TAL, which is higher than the range of options recommended by the Monitoring Committee (the scientific advisory body), has a 75% probability of preventing overfishing. However, it does not account for an inherent pattern in the stock assessment model that overestimates biomass and underestimates fishing mortality. The decrease in quota responds to continued overfishing on the summer flounder stock as well as its overfished status. Under the new Magnuson-Stevens Act provisions, summer flounder must be rebuilt by 2013.

The 2008 black sea bass TAL was set at 4.22 million pounds, divided into a 2.07 million pound commercial quota and a 2.15 million pound recreational harvest limit. The approved TAL is consistent with the TAL recommended by the Monitoring Committee; it does represent a 2.28 million pound decrease from last year and responds to the stock's decreased biomass and overfished condition. The black sea bass rebuilding deadline is 2010. No changes were made to minimum sizes, vent sizes, or mesh restrictions.

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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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For scup, the Commission and Council approved a total allowable catch (TAC) of 9.9 million pounds, which includes both a TAL and discard allowance. The TAC is divided into a 5.46 million pound commercial quota and a 1.88 million pound recreational harvest limit. The approved TAC is consistent with that recommended by the Monitoring Committee. The decrease in quota from last year responds to the decrease in both state and federal trawl survey indices and the species' overfished status.

For bluefish, the Commission and Council approved a TAC of 31.9 million pounds, which includes both a TAL and discard allowance. The TAC is divided into an 8.9 million pound commercial quota and a 19.2 million pound recreational harvest limit. The approved TAC is consistent with that recommended by the Monitoring Committee. The 2006 stock assessment update indicates that projected stock biomass for the 2008 fishing year is at approximately 99% of its rebuilding target. The stock rebuilding deadline is 2010 and biomass is projected to be at or above the target in 2009.

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