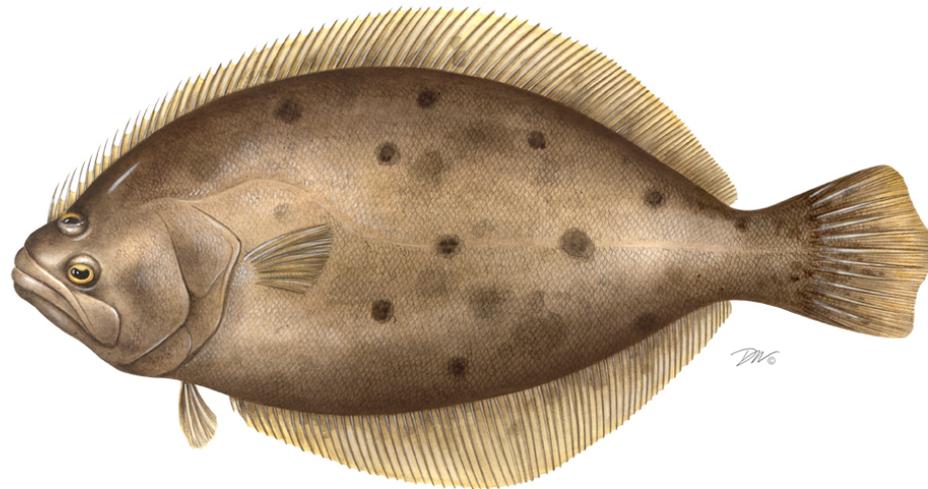




# Summer Flounder Rec Working Group Calls Summary



**Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black  
Sea Bass Management Board  
August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017**

# Outline



- Background
- Rec Working Group Calls Discussion and Draft Prospectus
  - short term strategy
  - longer term strategy
- Questions

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# Background



## May 2017 Meeting

- Rec Working Group 're-energized' to reconsider components of Summer Flounder Recreational Management
- Group met via conference calls in June and July
- Staff presented group information on recent addenda, fishery performance, & 'bounds' of current management program

# Draft Prospectus: Short term



- Develop a new addendum for 2018 management?
  - Group was in favor of continuing regional management and current regional alignment in 2018
  - Noted challenges of moving to a different approach
  - One idea: create a coastwide set of measures that each state/region could then alter to meet their needs
    - Unclear how this would work with MAFMC management
  - Number of items were discussed under this topic

# Draft Prospectus: Short term



- 2018 RHL & evaluating coastwide harvest
  - Group interested in treating coastwide RHL as ‘soft target’ for evaluating harvest
    - Tied to recent TC arguments on timeliness of data, imprecision of MRIP data, and Addendum XXVIII process & results
    - Approach presents challenges for joint management with MAFMC & Council Accountability Measures
    - One Rec WG members recommended using total fishing mortality instead of rec harvest

# Draft Prospectus: Short term



- Consider two year timeframe ('18 & '19) for management
  - Rec WG members did not reach consensus on if a new addendum should be for more than one year.
  - Many Rec WG members indicated that if addendum were initiated, it should be crafted specifically to the 2018 RHL.
  - Staff noted that the current Addendum XXVIII can be extended for an additional year (expiring on December 31, 2018)
    - BUT current Addendum is vague in providing guidance on crafting specific regional management measures for 2018.

# Draft Prospectus: Short term



- Consider Confidence Intervals instead of MRIP point estimates for evaluating 2017 harvest & projecting 2018 harvest.
  - TC has expressed interest in this concept, but have not had time to fully develop a new approach
  - Challenge: recent fluctuations in coastwide RHLs from 2014-2017 and 2014-2016 harvest, while measures have been constant
  - Recommendation: short term, maintain evaluation of preliminary harvest to set subsequent year measures
    - Group: notes that using data through wave 4 to project harvest through end of year is generally stable

# Draft Prospectus: Short term



- Consider different regional alignment than Addendum XXVIII
  - The group put forward no other regional alignment or regional options
- Re-consider Conservation Equivalency
  - Challenge: regional consistency while maintaining CE flexibility in setting measures.
  - Central Question: State by state CE vs Regional Management
  - Regional Targets? Concern raised about ‘de-facto’ allocation

# Draft Prospectus: Short term



- Discussion on Timetable of potential Addendum
  - Staff pointed out that if no new approach, regional alignment is put forward, and status quo evaluation of preliminary harvest continues, starting addendum process sooner is not feasible

# 1 Alternative offered



- August 2017: Set 2018 Specifications joint meeting (next week)
- December 2017: use 2017 Prelim harvest estimates, assume 2017 harvest to be equal to the RHL adjusted by average overage/underage of the measures relative to the RHL from the previous 3 years (2014-2016).
  - calculate an upper and lower bound based on CI/PSE.
- If 2018 RHL is within the bounds of the number calculated, then no change in rec measures would occur.
- If 2018 RHL is higher than upper bound of the number calculated then allow for liberalization of the difference between the 2018 RHL & upper bound.
- If the 2018 RHL is lower than the lower bound of the number calculated in 2), then require regulations to become more restrictive by the difference between the 2018 RHL and the lower bound.

# Long Term Strategy



- Undertake new benchmark stock assessment, integrating to the extent possible all emerging scientific/biological studies and evaluation (Fall 2018)
- Evaluate and consider adopting an F-based management approach for the recreational summer flounder fishery (Summer 2018)
  - Via RFP administered by MAFMC
  - Aim: stabilize the fishery – making adjustments as needed, but not based on annual cycles of point-based estimates and projections and hard targets.
  - Utilize new approach to establish multi-year specifications and associated regulations, e.g., 3-year or 5-year periods
  - Consider, in advance, what such an approach would/could mean in terms of configuring future management programs.

# Long Term Strategy



- Improve use of recreational catch and effort [harvest] data (ongoing)
  - Address the impacts of MRIP recalibration
  - Mitigate the variability of MRIP data for management use
  - Evaluate opportunities to integrate/more fully utilize VTRs from for-hire sector and voluntary angler logbook data
  - Evaluate opportunities to assess catch over multiple years, e.g., 3-year or 5-year periods [factoring in stock conditions]
  - Evaluate opportunities to apply confidence intervals to catch estimates
- Undertaking visioning exercise(s) to address and plan for program development in future years (ongoing).

# Summary



- Rec WG did not reach consensus on a different recreational management approach for 2018
- 2018 Options:
  - 1) coastwide measures
  - 2) state by state measures under Conservation Equivalency
  - 3) Addendum XXVIII (can be extended for one more year)

**Addendum not needed, unless a different approach is preferred**



**Questions?**

# Recent Summer Flounder Addenda



- Starting in 2014 (Addendum XXV), Regional Management has been in place for the recreational fishery
- In 2014
  - Initial regions: Massachusetts- Rhode Island; Connecticut- New Jersey; Delaware-Virginia; North Carolina
  - Measures for each region were set up to be similar to 2013 measures
  - No regional harvest target; coastwide RHL ‘new’ target
  - Following March 2014 call, Massachusetts and Rhode Island became separate regions



# Size Limit

State	2013	2014
Massachusetts	16	16
Rhode Island	18	18
Connecticut	17.5	18
DEEP Shore Sites	16	16
New York	19	18
New Jersey	17.5	18
NJ Island Beach	-	16
Delaware	17	16
Maryland	16	16
PRFC	16	16
Virginia	16	16
North Carolina	15	15



# Bag Limit

State	2013	2014
Massachusetts	5	5
Rhode Island	8	8
Connecticut	5	5
New York	4	5
New Jersey	5	5
NJ Island Beach	-	2
Delaware	4 fish in both years (no change)	
Maryland		
PRFC		
Virginia		
North Carolina	6 fish in both years (no change)	



# Season Length

State	2013	2014
Massachusetts	131 days	125 day season
Rhode Island	245 days	245 day season
Connecticut	176 days	128 day season
New York	151 days	
New Jersey	133 days	
Delaware	365 days	365 days
Maryland	275 days	365 days
PRFC	365 days in both years (no change)	
Virginia		
North Carolina		



# 2014-2016

- Addenda XXV, XXVI, XXVII
- Nearly all measures remained constant for 3 years
  - NJ was designated its own region in 2016, with separate measures in Delaware Bay/COLREGs line: 17" min. size limit in NJ DE BAY COLREGS; 18" NJ Coast
- Coastwide Performance relative to RHL
  - Slight overage in 2014 (+5%)
  - No overage in 2015 (-36%)
  - Overage in 2016 (+14%)



# Addendum XXVIII

- 2017 measures
  - All states with the exception of North Carolina and New Jersey increased their size limit by 1 inch, reduced their bag limit to no more than 4 fish (3 fish for states of CT-NJ), and maintained 2014-2016 season lengths & approximate start/end dates
  - NJ decreased season by 24 days (May 25-Sept 5)



# 2018 Management

- Addendum XXVIII can be extended for an additional year (expiring Dec 31, 2018), but....
  - Language is still vague in addressing region vs coastwide overages and adjusting measures
  - Standard Methodology is in place for evaluating preliminary harvest estimates from terminal year (2017) to evaluate overages and craft measures

# 2018 Management cont'd



Addendum XXVIII language for 2018:

The TC will use harvest estimates and fishery performance from 2017 to evaluate the 2018 regional management approach. **If the coastwide RHL is exceeded, then region specific harvest will be evaluated, with the understanding that more restrictive management measures will be needed to constrain regional harvest in 2018. If the predicted 2018 combined regional harvest is higher than the 2018 RHL, regions will have to adjust their management measures in 2018.** The TC will develop proposed measures for each region that, when combined, will constrain the coastwide harvest to the 2018 RHL. Any number of size, possession, and season combinations can be evaluated when looking at regional management.



# Draft Prospectus

- Outlines another approach for 2018 management (short term strategy)
  - Potentially assess harvest on multiple year basis using Confidence Intervals
  - Could use same regions as in 2014-2015, 2016, or something else: GUIDANCE NEEDED IF LATTER
  - Could establish regional harvest targets and conservation equivalency proposal timelines
  - Rethink measures by sector (for-hire vs. angler)
  - Change our annual timeline to allow states more certainty in measures for upcoming season sooner



# **Black Sea Bass Management Measures for Wave 6 2017**

Kirby Rootes-Murdy  
ASMFC Summer Meeting  
August 3, 2017

# Background



- Joint ASMFC/MAFMC Meeting February 2017
  - Increase in 2017 RHL from 2.82 to 4.29 million pounds
  - Board and Council: approved Status Quo Federal Measures\*, maintain 2016 harvest levels for Northern Region states (MA-NJ) in 2017
- Joint ASMFC/MAFMC May Meeting 2017
  - Final 2016 harvest estimate exceeded both previous and current 2017 RHLs
  - Board moved to reduce possession for states of Rhode Island through New Jersey to 5 fish for Wave 6 (November-December) 2017

State		Min Size Limit	Possession Limit	Season	
RI		15	3	6/24-8/31	191 days
			7	9/1-10/31	
			5	11/1-12/31	
CT	Private	15	5	5/1-12/31	245 days
	For-hire		8	5/1-10/31	
			5	11/1-12/31	
NY		15	3	6/27-8/31	188 days
			8	9/1-10/31	
			5	11/1-12/31	
NJ		12.5	10	5/23-6/19	161 days
			2	7/1-8/31	
		*	15	10/22-31	
			5	11/1-12/31	

# For Board Consideration



- Analysis indicates that coastwide redux associated with possession limit change: -5%
- Most states have not implemented the change in 2017 Wave 6 measures

# 2016 Harvest reduction



<b>State</b>	<b>Wave 6 reduction (# of fish)</b>	<b>Wave 6 % reduction</b>
RHODE ISLAND	17,418	-18%
CONNECTICUT	1,176	0%
NEW YORK	227,421	-26%
NEW JERSEY	46,302	-44%

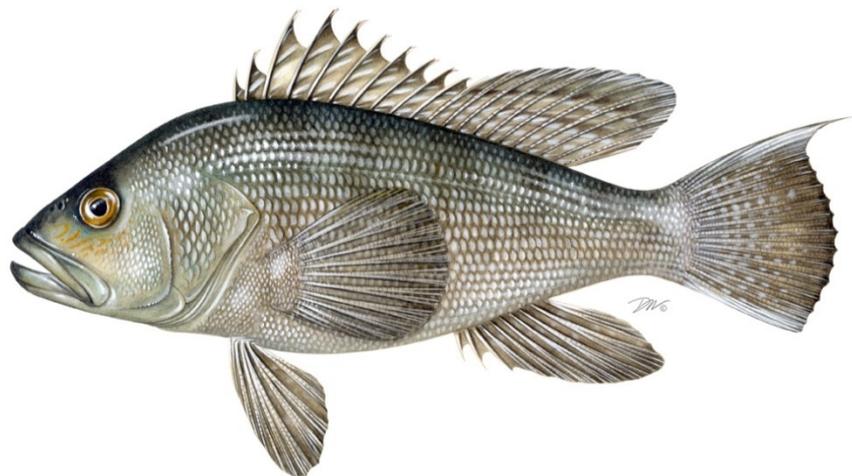
	<b>Coastwide Reduction (# of fish)</b>	<b>Coastwide Reduction (%)</b>
<b>2016 Harvest</b>	2,543,386	0%
<b>Projected 2017 Harvest</b>	2,424,316	-5%



**Questions?**



# **Draft Addendum XXX & Black Sea Bass Rec Working Group Call Summary**



**Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black  
Sea Bass Management Board  
August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017**

# Outline



- Background
- Presentation on Draft Addendum XXX and Management Options
- Rec WG comments and recommendations
- Questions
- Board: **provide feedback on current range of options**

# Structure of the Document



- Introduction
- Overview/Statement of the Problem
- Background
- Description of the Fishery
- Status of the Stock
- Proposed Management Program

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- Introduction
- Overview/Statement of the Problem
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- **Proposed Management Program**

# Background



- May 2017 Joint ASMFC Meeting
  - Addendum initiated with options for *‘regional allocations, regions with uniform regulations, and other alternatives to current North/South regional delineation (MA-NJ/DE-NC)’*
- Worked with MA staff to develop options currently in document
  - Further adjusted based on Rec WG feedback
- Aim is to begin the process earlier so as to have more clarity on management sooner in the year and to improve fairness & equity in fishery



# Coastwide Recreational Catch Limits

- For 2017
  - Recreational Harvest Limit= 4.29 million pounds  
(52% increase from 2016)
- For 2018
  - Recreational Harvest Limit= 3.66 million pounds  
**(14% decrease from 2017)**

# Proposed Management Options



- Option 1: Default Management Program
- Option 2: State Allocation of Annual RHL
  - Sub-Option 2A: Timeframes for specifying state allocation
- Option 3: Regional Allocation of Annual RHL
  - Sub-Option 3A: Regional alignment
  - Sub-Option 3B: Timeframes for specifying regional allocation
  - Sub-Option 3C: Management measures within a region
- Additional Sub-Option for 2 & 3: Accountability



# Option 1: Default Management Program

- FMP (1996)
  - Coastwide (both in state and federal waters) set of measures (size, bag, and season) specified to achieve 2018 RHL

# Option 2: State Allocation of RHL



- Similar concept of Conservation Equivalency in the Summer Flounder FMP
  - Each state would be allocated a share of the annual RHL
  - States would be responsible for developing measures to constrain harvest to their allocation annually
  - State proposals for 2018 measures would need to develop proposals for Board approval no later than 2018 ASMFC Winter Meeting (late Jan/early Feb)



## Sub-Option 2A: Timeframes for specifying state allocation

- Timeframe would be basis for annual share / percentage of RHL
  - Entire time series (1981-2016)
  - 1997-2016 (20 years)
  - 2007-2016 (10 years)
  - 2012-2016 (5 years)
- How to handle historical coastwide overages?

\*\*\*Need group guidance on this\*\*\*

# BSB Rec WG comments on Option 2



- Most preferred removing option
- If retained, following timeframes be removed
  - A) 1981-2016
  - B) 1997-2016
- Concerns over 2016 wv 6 data & data further back than 10 yrs
  - Recommend a ‘smoothing’ approach for 2016 data & add in following timeframes
  - A) 2007-2016 w/ NY Wv 6 data correction
  - **B) 2007-2015**
  - C) 2012-2016 w/NY Wv6 data correction
  - **D) 2012-2015**

# Option 2: State Allocations



- Advantages
  - Each state has an annual allocation to work from & to be evaluated against
  - Measures can be crafted to the state's unique needs
- Challenges
  - MRIP data/timeliness of data release/how to evaluate annual performance of measures
  - How to handle neighboring state/shared waterbodies regs
  - Choosing the appropriate timeframe for allocations
  - Regional rec management in Summer Flounder FMP developed because of similar challenges
  - **Caveat:** currently CE not in Black Sea Bass FMP, would only apply in state waters (state by state allocation/measures & federal measures)



## **Option 3: Regional Allocation of Annual RHL**

- Each region would have allocation
- Each region would develop measures to constrain harvest to their collective allocation
- Regional proposals would need Board approval no later than 2018 ASMFC Winter Meeting

# Option 3A: Regional alignment



- **A)** 2 Regions: MA-NJ (Northern Region); DE-NC\* (Southern Region)
- **B)** 2 Regions: MA-NY (North Region); NJ-NC\* (South Region)
- **C)** 3 Regions: MA-NY (North Region); NJ (Jersey Region); DE-NC\* (South Region)
- **D)** 4 Regions: MA-RI (North Region); CT-NY (Long Island Region); NJ (Jersey Region); DE-NC\* (South Region)



## Sub-Option 3B: Timeframes for specifying regional allocation

- Timeframe would be basis for annual share/percentage of RHL
  - Entire time series (1981-2016)
  - 1997-2016 (20 years)
  - 2007-2016 (10 years)
  - 2012-2016 (5 years)



# Sub-Option 3C: Management within region

- Address uniformity and equity concerns
- **A)** Uniform regulations within region (same size, bag, and season length)
- **B)** Uniform percent reduction/liberalization within a region
  - Could have differing measures but must not differ beyond 1" size limit, 1 fish bag limit, and 15 days in season

# BSB Rec WG comments on Option 3



- Most preferred this option
- Same comment as Option in removing timeframes
  - A) 1981-2016
  - B) 1997-2016
- Concerns over 2016 wv 6 data & data further back than 10 yrs
  - Recommend a ‘smoothing’ approach for 2016 data & add in following timeframes
  - A) 2007-2016 w/ NY Wv 6 data correction
  - **B) 2007-2015**
  - C) 2012-2016 w/NY Wv6 data correction
  - **D) 2012-2015**

# Option 3: Regional Allocation of RHL



- Advantages
  - Each region has an annual allocation to work from & a be evaluated against
  - Regional allocation address regional abundance
- Challenges
  - MRIP data/timeliness of data release/how to evaluate annual performance of measures
  - How to handle coastwide overages vs just regional overages
  - Regional rec management in Summer Flounder FMP has similar challenges currently

# Other considerations



- Accountability sub-option: Nearly all were against percentage or pound-for-pound paybacks due to issues with MRIP data.
- 1 Rec WG member prefer total catch be evaluated (A+B1+B2)
- 1 BSB Rec WG member: regional allocations should be based on the size of angling population and availability of black sea bass to those anglers, not on past harvest.
- Many Rec WG members: prefer going to multi-year avg of MRIP data to evaluate harvest

# Other considerations cont'd



- 1 member: if allocations went into effect, need to be revisited regularly, if not annually.
- Some were in favor using a 'common sense' set of measures
- Some indicated F based management could be done in the future, but not in 2018 based on MAFMC staff feedback.
- 1 set of 'common sense' measures: MA-NY, 5 fish at 15" min size; NJ at 10 fish at 13" min size; DE-NC 15 fish at 12.5" min size. 365 open season for all regions.\*



# Timeframe for Addendum provisions

- Option 1 (2018 only)
- Option 2 (2018-2019)\*
- Option 3 (2018-2020)\*

\*Currently don't have RHL specified beyond 2018

# Additional considerations



- Re-thinking annual timetable for evaluating fishery (tied to timeliness of current year data)
- F-based management
  - What would it mean for black sea bass recreational management & current RHL?
- Council (possible) action to open wave 1 in 2018 to everyone for black sea bass rec fishing



# Questions