



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

ASMFC & MAFMC June 2020 Meeting Webinar

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

ASMFC & MAFMC Meeting Webinar
June 16 & 17, 2020

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Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

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**ASMFC SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP AND BLACK SEA BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD & MAFMC
(JUNE 16, 2020)**

Meeting Summary

The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board (Board) met jointly with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) to receive the results of an updated summer flounder economic model, review draft management options for consideration in the black sea bass commercial state allocation addendum and Council amendment, and discuss draft alternatives for the joint Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment. The Board also discussed how to consider state conservation equivalency proposals for COVID-19 related fishery closures. This meeting was conducted by webinar due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Presentations, briefing materials, and webinar recordings are available at: <http://www.mafmc.org/briefing/june-2020>.

Summer Flounder Commercial/Recreational Allocation Study Model Update

The Board and Council received preliminary results of an updated economic model, developed by Dr. Kurt Schnier (University of California, Merced) and Dr. Rob Hicks (College of William & Mary), to evaluate the allocation of total allowable landings between the commercial and recreational summer flounder fisheries. The model, first developed in 2016, was recently updated to include revised Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) data as well as revised commercial data through 2018. The model evaluates the marginal economic benefits of various allocation levels to the commercial and recreational sectors. A full report on the update is still in development, but preliminary results suggest that changes in allocations between sectors in either direction could potentially be supported due to the large overlap of uncertainty bounds for the marginal willingness to pay for each sector. The model developers found it is likely, but not statistically significant, that increasing the recreational allocation from the current 40% allocation of landings would increase overall benefits from the fisheries. The Board and Council will consider the final results when developing and analyzing potential summer flounder allocation changes through the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment.

Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment

The Board and Council reviewed draft management options and public comments from the Council's scoping period for a joint addendum and amendment that will consider changes to the state allocations of the black sea bass commercial quota. This action will also consider whether the state allocations should be added to the Council's Fishery Management Plan (FMP) or if they should continue to be managed under only under the Commission's FMP. The Board and Council agreed to remove the option for a hybrid approach, which would combine multiple other options, from further consideration in this action. They also modified the range of draft sub-options considered under the trigger approach, and added an alternative to consider federal in-season closures when the coastwide quota plus an additional buffer is projected to be reached. They agreed to continue development of all other management approaches presented. The Board and Council will consider approval of a draft addendum for public comment and a final range of management alternatives for the amendment during their August joint meeting, which would allow public hearings to take place in the fall.

Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment

The Board and Council reviewed recommendations from the Fishery Management Action Team/Plan Development Team (FMAT/PDT) on the range of alternatives to be considered in the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment. This amendment will review and potentially modify the allocations of total allowable catch or landings between the commercial and recreational sectors for all three species. The Council and Board agreed to move forward with the recommendations of the FMAT/PDT for a refined range of management alternatives. Approaches retained for further consideration include:

- Updating existing base years with revised data
- Options for revised base years
- An option that aims to maintain approximately status quo harvest by sector from 2018-2019 under the current ABCs
- Approaches with different allocations above and below a specified trigger
- Options for averaging several different allocation options
- Recreational sector separation between the for-hire and private/shore recreational modes
- Allocation transfers
- Options for future allocation changes to be made through a framework or addendum process

The Council and Board expect to approve a final range of alternatives during their August joint meeting, with a draft public hearing document expected to be considered for release for public comment by the end of 2020. Additional information regarding the amendment process and timeline is available at: <https://www.mafmc.org/actions/sfsbsb-allocation-amendment>.

Issues for Consideration in Separate Processes

The Council and Board agreed that three of the issues removed from this amendment warrant further consideration through a separate process. These items are briefly described below.

- **"Harvest control rule" based approaches:** This conceptual approach was submitted by six recreational organizations during the scoping process. After reviewing a number of concerns raised by the FMAT, including possible inconsistency with Magnuson-Stevens Act requirements as currently configured, the Council and Board agreed the concepts in this proposal would be more appropriate to explore through a separate action such as the Recreational Reform Initiative (see the following section).
- **Recreational accountability alternatives:** The Council and Board agreed that recreational accountability could be considered within the other management alternatives being considered and that major changes to the system of accountability measures are beyond current scope of this action.
- **Recreational catch accounting alternatives:** Many scoping comments supported improving recreational catch accounting and reducing uncertainty in recreational data. The Council and Board agreed this is an important issue but concluded it falls outside the scope of this allocation action. It was also noted recreational catch accounting may be more appropriate to pursue for all recreationally managed species, including those under other FMPs, outside of this amendment.

After discussing how to best address these issues, the Council and Board agreed to consider initiating a joint action by the end of 2020 to consider recreational accountability and catch accounting. As described below, some of these topics may be addressed through a management action associated with the Recreational Reform Initiative.

Recreational Reform Initiative

The Council and Board reviewed a draft outline of topics under consideration through the Recreational Reform Initiative. This initiative addresses all four jointly managed species, including summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish. After considering the topics currently under consideration in this initiative, as well as items removed from further consideration through the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment (see above), the Council and Board tasked staff with determining which items could be addressed through a joint framework/addendum and which changes would require an amendment. The Council and Board plan to further consider all potential recreational management approaches discussed through this action to date and will consider initiating a joint management action to address priority topics before the end of 2020.

Process for Board Consideration of Conservation Equivalency Proposals related to COVID-19

The Board discussed the appropriate process to review and consider approval of state conservation equivalency proposals that address fishery closures due to COVID-19 restrictions. This discussion was taken up in response to a proposal from Massachusetts to extend the end of the state's for-hire recreational black sea bass season in 2020 to account for days closed to for-hire fishing at the beginning of the season due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure a transparent and consistent process for all states, the Board agreed to wait for further guidance from the Commission's Executive Committee before considering conservation equivalency proposals of this nature. The Board agreed states considering conservation equivalency measures should inform staff of potential proposals, and the Massachusetts proposal and any others will be considered by the Board no later than the August 2020 meeting.

For more information on summer flounder and scup management, contact Dustin Colson Leaning, ASMFC Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at dleaning@asmfc.org, and contact Caitlin Starks, ASMFC Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org for more information on black sea bass management.

Motions

Black Sea Bass Commercial State Allocation Amendment

I move to remove the dynamic base allocation sub-option from the trigger option.

Council: Motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Ms. Bolen

Board: Motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Ms. Bolen.

Motion fails for lack of Council majority (9 in favor, 9 opposed).

Based on the recent MRIP data utilized and the increased commercial quota, I make a motion to refer back to the PDT/FMAT re-evaluation of the triggers and including trigger levels of 3.5 million and 4.5 million pounds.

Council: Motion made by Mr. Hughes and seconded by Mr. Cimino. (14 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstention)

Board: Motion made by Mr. Cimino and seconded by Mr. Clark. (7 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstention)

Motion carries.

Move to add a sub-alternative for in-season closures based on the coastwide quota plus a percent buffer.

Council: Motion made by Mr. Heins and seconded by Mr. Clark.

Board: Motion made by Ms. Meserve and seconded by Dr. McNamee.

Motion approved by consensus by Board and Council.

Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment
I move that the Council and Board accept all the FMAT's recommendations for this amendment.

Council: Motion made by Mr. DiLernia and seconded by Mr. Heins.

Board: Motion made by Mr. Clark and seconded by Mr. Batsavage.

Motion amended.

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute to remove options 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 4.2, 8.1, and 8.2 from further consideration and add 10 for further consideration.

Board: Motion made by Mr. Reid and seconded by Mr. Hasbrouck.

Council: Motion made by Ms. Nolan and seconded by Ms. Wilke. (9 in favor, 10 opposed)

Motion fails for lack of Council majority.

Move to amend the original motion to add "the Council and Board will consider initiating an action by the end of 2020 to develop a recreational accountability and accounting joint action."

Council: Motion made by Mr. Hughes and seconded by Ms. Nolan. (10 in favor, 9 opposed, 1 abstention)

Board: Motion made by Mr. Hasbrouck and seconded by Mr. Reid. (8 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 abstention)

Motion carries.

Main motion as amended

Move that the Council and Board accept all the FMAT's recommendations for this amendment. The Council and Board will consider initiating an action by the end of 2020 to develop a recreational accountability and accounting joint action.

Council: 16 in favor, 2 opposed

Board: 10 in favor, 1 opposed

Motion carries.

ASMFC BLUEFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD & MAFMC (JUNE 17, 2020)

Meeting Summary

The Commission's Bluefish Management Board (Board) met jointly with the Council to review recommendations from the FMAT/PDT on the range of alternatives to be considered in the Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment. The Board and Council voted to remove the Northeast Fisheries Science Center's method for developing estimates of recreational discards in weight, which applies to the commercial/recreational sector allocations and for-hire recreational sector separation alternatives. This decision was made due to the lack of discard at length data necessary for developing separate allocations for the for-hire and private angler modes. However, sector allocations and for-hire sector separation alternatives will continue to be refined using catch and landings data. The Council and Board also requested FMAT include a new set of alternatives that will explore the ability for states to have a

minimum default commercial allocation. The following issues will continue to be further developed and will be presented to the Council and Board at the next joint meeting in August:

- Fishery management plan goals and objectives
- Recreational/commercial allocations
- Commercial allocations to the states
- Commercial allocations to the states with minimum default allocations
- Regional commercial quotas
- Commercial state-to-state quota transfers
- Recreational/commercial sector transfers
- Rebuilding plan
- Sector specific management uncertainty
- Recreational sector separation between the for-hire and private/shore recreational modes
- *De minimis* provision to relieve states from having to adopt fishery regulations

For more information on bluefish, contact Dustin Colson Leaning, ASMFC Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at dleaning@asmfc.org. Additional information regarding the amendment process and timeline can be found at [bluefish amendment action page](#).

Motions

Move to remove from the bluefish allocation and rebuilding amendment: 2.06-2.09 (Allocations based on catch data, NEFSC discards), 2.10-2.13 (Allocations based on landings data), 6.2.08-6.2.10 (For-hire sector separation allocations based on catch data, NEFSC discards).

Council: Motion made by Mr. Heins and seconded by Mr. DiLernia.

Board: Motion made by Ms. Hart and seconded by Ms. Meserve.

Motion amended.

Motion to Amend

Motion to amend to remove 2.10-2.13 from the motion.

Council: Motion made by Mr. Nowalsky and seconded by Mr. Clark. (17 in favor, 3 opposed)

Board: Motion made by Mr. Nowalsky and seconded by Mr. Reid. (12 in favor, 2 opposed)

Motion carries.

Main Motion as Amended:

Move to remove from the bluefish allocation and rebuilding amendment: 2.06-2.09 (Allocations based on catch data, NEFSC discards), 6.2.08-6.2.10 (For-hire sector separation allocations based on catch data, NEFSC discards).

Council: Motion made by Mr. Heins and seconded by Mr. DiLernia. (19 in favor)

Board: Motion made by Ms. Hart and seconded by Ms. Meserve. (14 in favor)

Motion carries.

Move to exclude the Florida regional allocation proposal and add an option for a minimum default allocation.

Council: Motion made by Mr. Gwin and seconded by Mr. Cimino.

Board: Motion made by Ms. Meserve and seconded by Ms. Patterson.

Motion substituted.

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute to add an option for a minimum default allocation.

Council: Motion made by Mr. DiLernia and seconded by Mr. Nowalsky. (9 in favor, 7 opposed, 1 abstention)

Board: Motion made by Mr. Nowalsky and seconded by Mr. Haymans. (12 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 abstention)

Motion carries.

Main Motion as Substituted

Move to add an option for a minimum default allocation.

Board: 15 in favor

Council: 18 in favor, 1 abstention

Motion carries.