Assessment of the current state of Black Sea Bass, Summer Flounder and Tautog Fisheries off the Delmarva Coast.

*Observation's from a long time recreational fisherman. April 2015*

This assessment is based on decades of fishing the structure in the area. There has been a major change during the last 15 years; some good, some not so good. It has gradually come to what I am about to describe. This only applies to the Delmarva coast where I fish.

First I will tell you that there is no shortage of Black Sea Bass. The issue here is that we need to travel further offshore to catch them. From 3 to 15 miles offshore, we do not catch anywhere near the amount of BSB we used to. Many structures once loaded with BSB are now virtually devoid of them. However, fishing is good on wrecks offshore of the 20 mile line. Something is wrong here, but I do not know why. The recommendation here is a bag limit of 5 BSB at 14 Inches season May 15 to Oct 15.

Those same structures that once held BSB are now excellent Summer Flounder fishing spots. This was not the case 15 years ago. These locations are loaded with Summer Flounder, but the BSB are gone...Could there be a reason for this?

Summer flounder seem to be flourishing; which recently includes some of the best fishing I have seen in years. The recommendation here is 4 fish at 16 inches, season May 1 to Oct 1.

*Tautog. Here is the big problem simply because of the nature of the fish; they are residents. They are being overfished and the live market is demolishing them with little to no enforcement. We do not see the amount of Tog we used to on the spots we used to catch them. This fishery, as much as I like to catch and eat them, needs to be closed. Some type of “emergency closure” is needed here. Please do something before it’s too late.*

This is what is happening from the view of someone who fishes the DMV Coast. No statistics, no science, no calculations...just what is real and seen.

The only other thing that we notice over this period of time is a summertime influx of Grey Triggerfish. I can go to spots and catch as many as I want, and there are no regulations. Perhaps a 4 fish limit here would be a good thing. I self-impose that limit myself, but many others do not.