INTERSTATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Bluefish

Species Range
Coastwide (Maine through Florida)

Management Unit
Maine through Florida

Stock Status
The 2019 NEFSC bluefish operational assessment indicates that the stock is overfished and overfishing was not occurring in 2018 relative to the updated biological reference points. The assessment is an update through 2018 of commercial and calibrated MRIP data.

Reference Points
- F Threshold = \( F_{MSY_{PROXY}} = F_{35\%SPR} = 0.183 \)
  - Current (2014) = 0.146
- Spawning Stock Biomass threshold (1/2 \( SSB_{MSY_{PROXY}} \)) = 219.0 million lbs
- Spawning Stock Biomass target (\( SSB_{MSY_{PROXY}} \)) = \( SSB_{35\%} \) = 438.1 million lbs
  - Current SSB (2018) = 200.7 million lbs

Spawning Stock Biomass is estimated at 200.7 million pounds, approximately 46% of its target and 92% of the threshold. Fishing mortality is estimated to be 0.146, below the fishing mortality threshold (0.183). Although fishing mortality was below the threshold in 2018, fishing mortality has exceeded the updated threshold every year since 1985.

Involved States and Jurisdictions
ME, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, NMFS, USFWS

Active Boards/Committees
ASMFC Bluefish Management Board, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC), Demersal Species Committee, ASMFC Bluefish Technical Committee, MAFMC Bluefish Monitoring Committee, ASMFC Bluefish Advisory Panel, ASMFC Bluefish Stock Assessment Subcommittee, ASMFC Bluefish Plan Review Team

Chairs
Board, Chair – Chris Batsavage (12/2019); Vice-Chair – Vacant
Technical Committee, Chair – Mike Celestino (7/2014)
Advisory Panel, Chair – Vacant
Stock Assessment Subcommittee – Mike Celestino (8/2011)
Management Plan History

**Amendment 1 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Bluefish Fishery (1998)**

Amendment 1, prepared by MAFMC and ASMFC, is intended to manage the bluefish (*Pomatomus saltatrix*) fishery under both the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA) of 1976, as amended by the Sustainable Fisheries Act (SFA), and Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act (ACFCMA). The goal of the management plan is to conserve the bluefish resource along the Atlantic coast. The Council and Commission have adopted five major objectives to achieve this goal: (1) increase understanding of the stock and of the fishery; (2) provide the highest availability of bluefish to U.S. fishermen while maintaining, within limits, traditional uses of bluefish; (3) provide for cooperation among the coastal states, the various regional marine fishery management councils, and federal agencies involved along the coast to enhance the management of bluefish throughout its range; (4) prevent recruitment overfishing; and (5) reduce the waste in both the commercial and recreational fisheries.

**Addendum I: Biological Monitoring Program (February 2012)**

Addendum I establishes a coastwide monitoring program for bluefish to improve the quantity and quality of ageing information used in future bluefish stock assessments.

Pending Management Action

In June 2018, the Board and Council released for public comment a scoping and public information document for a new amendment to the Bluefish FMP. The document solicited input on issues to include in the amendment, including revision of the FMP goals and objectives, allocations between sectors and states, and the quota transfer process.

Annual Events

- Annual compliance reports are due May 1. The PRT reviews compliance reports and prepares an FMP Review. The FMP Review is presented to the Board in August.
- Monitoring committee meets in July to outline recommendations for the upcoming year’s fishing regulations including any proposed changes to the minimum fish size, mesh size, escape vent sizes, or other compliance criteria for the commercial fishery, as well as to recommend changes to the quota to account for management uncertainty. The Monitoring Committee forwards recommendations to the Board and Council.
- Board and Council meet jointly at the MAFMC August meeting to adopt a TAC and set annual specifications.
- September: Staff sends an initial commercial allocation (for the next year) memo to the Board.
- NMFS reviews the joint recommendation and sets the final annual federal specifications in January of each year. A memo is sent to the Board detailing the annual federal specifications.
- The Coordinator sends the AP an update after each Management Board meeting.