



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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States Schedule Public Hearings on Draft Addendum XXV Addendum Seeks Input on Management Options for 2014 Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass Recreational Fisheries

Arlington, VA – The Atlantic coast states of Massachusetts through Virginia have scheduled their hearings to gather public comment on Draft Addendum XXV to the Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plans. The dates, times, and locations of the scheduled hearings follow.

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

January 16, 2014 at 5 PM
Bourne Fire Station #3, Meeting Room
53 Meetinghouse Lane
Sagamore Beach, Massachusetts
Contact: Nichola Meserve at 617.626.1531

Rhode Island Division of Fish & Wildlife

January 15, 2014 at 6 PM
University of Rhode Island, Coastal Institute
Auditorium
South Ferry Road
Narragansett, Rhode Island
Contact: Jason McNamee at 401.423.1943

Connecticut Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection

January 14, 2014 at 7 PM
Marine Headquarters
Boating Education Center, Building 3
333 Ferry Road
Old Lyme, Connecticut
Contact: David Simpson at 860.434.6043

New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation

January 14, 2014 at 6 PM
Bureau of Marine Resources
205 North Belle Mead Road, Suite 1
East Setauket, New York
Contact: Steve Heins at 631.444.0435

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

January 13, 2014 at 7 PM
Ocean County Administration Building
Public Hearing Room 119
101 Hooper Avenue
Toms River, New Jersey
Contact: Tom Baum at 609.748.2020

Delaware Dept. of Natural Resources & Environmental Control

January 10, 2014 at 6 PM
DNREC Auditorium
89 Kings Highway
Dover, Delaware
Contact: John Clark at 302.739.9108

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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.

Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources

January 9, 2014 at 5 PM

Ocean Pines Library

11107 Cathell Road

Berlin, Maryland

Contact: Steve Doctor at 410.213.1431

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

January 8, 2014 at 6 PM

2600 Washington Avenue

4th Floor Conference Room

Newport News, Virginia

Contact: Rob O'Reilly at 757.247.2247

Draft Addendum XXV proposes management approaches for the 2014 summer flounder and black sea bass recreational fisheries. For summer flounder, the Draft Addendum includes options that allow for management measures by region and the sharing of unused quota – both with the intent of providing more equity in recreational harvest opportunities along the coast. The specific regions being considered are (1) Massachusetts; Rhode Island through New Jersey; Delaware through Virginia; and North Carolina and (2) Massachusetts and Rhode Island; Connecticut through New Jersey; Delaware through Virginia; and North Carolina.

The Draft Addendum was initiated to address a growing concern that current summer flounder management measures (as established under the Fishery Management Plan) are not providing recreational fishermen along the coast with equitable harvest opportunities to the resource. Those measures, involving state-specific recreational management measures under conservation equivalency are increasingly being viewed as problematic due to several factors. These factors include: reliance upon recreational harvest estimates for a single year (1998) as the basis for individual state targets; a change in the abundance of the resource; and changes in the socio-economic characteristics of the fishery. The impact of the management program seemed to affect New York the most, with a 21" size limit (by 2009) and a short season including mid-season closure. In 2013, with a fully recovered stock, New York's minimum size (19") was at least one inch higher than any other state, one and a half inches higher than its bordering states.

The Draft Addendum proposes a more flexible and equitable conservation approach that allows the management program to adjust to past, current, and future changes to the resource and the fishery. The biological characteristics of the summer flounder have changed with the restoration of this stock. In particular, there has been a substantial expansion in the size and age composition, with greater overall abundance and increased numbers of larger fish.

The Draft Addendum also proposes two options for the 2014 black sea bass recreational fishery (1) coastwide measures (currently proposed at 13" TL minimum size, a 5 fish possession limit, and a season from June 1 to September 30) or (2) the continued use of management measures by northern (MA – NJ) and southern regions (DE – NC). The regional management approach has been used since 2011 and offers some advantages over coastwide regulations, which can disproportionately impact states within the management unit. Specifically, regional measures can address geographic differences in the stock (size, abundance and seasonality) while maintaining the consistent application of management measures by neighboring states.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on Draft Addendum XXV, either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. The Draft Addendum is available on the Commission website on the Public Input page at <http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>. It can also be accessed directly at

http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/SF_BSB_DraftAddendumXXV_PublicComment_Dec2013.pdf. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM (EST) on January 24, 2014** and should be forwarded to Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (fax) or via email at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org (Subject line: Draft Addendum XXV).