FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 22, 2016

Arlington, VA – The Commission’s Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board announces the availability of Draft Addendum XXVIII for public comment. The document, which was approved by the Board in early December, presents a suite of management approaches, including regional options, to achieve the 2017 recreational harvest limit (RHL). The Atlantic coastal states of Massachusetts through North Carolina have scheduled public hearings to gather public comment. The details of those scheduled hearings follow:

**Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries**
*January 11, 2017 at 6 PM*
Bourne Community Center, Room # 1
239 Main Street
Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts
Contact: Nichola Meserve at 617.626.1531

**Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife**
*January 12, 2017; 6:00 PM*
University of Rhode Island Bay Campus
Corliss Auditorium South Ferry Road
Narragansett, Rhode Island
Contact: Robert Ballou at 401.222.4700 ext. 4420

**Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection**
*January 10, 2017 at 7 PM*
CT DEEP Boating Education Center
333 Ferry Road
Old Lyme, Connecticut
Contact: David Simpson at 860.434.6043

**New York State Department of Environmental Conservation**
*January 9, 2017 at 6:30 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 5, 2017 at 6:30 PM*
Galloway Township Branch Library
306 East Jimmie Leeds Rd
Galloway, New Jersey
Contact: Tom Baum at 609.748.2020

**Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control**
*January 17, 2017 at 6 PM*
DNREC Auditorium
89 Kings Highway
Dover, Delaware
Contact: John Clark at 302.739.9914
Draft Addendum XXVIII was initiated to consider alternative management approaches for the 2017 recreational summer flounder fisheries, while also seeking to address needed reductions due to a decrease in the coastwide RHL in 2017. In August, the Board and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council approved a 30% reduction in the 2017 coastwide RHL relative to 2016. This action was taken in response to the 2016 Stock Assessment Update which found fishing mortality was higher in recent years and population estimates were lower than previously projected.

Changes in summer flounder distribution, abundance and availability have created problems under the static state-by-state allocations, with overages often occurring. In response, states would implement regulations to reduce harvest, resulting in differing regulations between neighboring states. In 2014, the Board shifted away from traditional state-by-state allocations to a regional approach for managing summer flounder recreational fisheries. A benefit of the regional approach is it provides the states the flexibility to share allocations. The intent is to set regulations that account for shifting distribution, abundance and availability while providing stability and greater regulatory consistency among neighboring states, and enabling the states to meet but not exceed the coastwide RHL.

Anglers and interested stakeholders are encouraged to provide input on Draft Addendum XXVIII either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. The Draft Addendum can be obtained at http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/SummerFlounderDraftAddendumXXVIII_PublicComment_Dec2016.pdf or via the Commission’s website, www.asmfc.org, under Public Input. Public comment will be accepted until 5 PM (EST) on January 19, 2017 and should be forwarded to Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Senior Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St, Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org (Subject line: Summer Flounder Draft Addendum XXVIII).

The Board will review submitted public comment and consider final action on the Draft Addendum at the Commission’s Winter Meeting in February 2017. For more information, please contact Kirby Rootes-Murdy at krootes-murdy@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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