



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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States Schedule Public Hearings on Draft Addenda XXXI and XXXII Management Board Seeks Input on Options for Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management

New York, NY – Atlantic states from Massachusetts through Virginia have scheduled hearings to gather public comment on Draft Addenda XXXI and XXXII to the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The details of those hearings follow:

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

November 28, 2018 at 6 PM

Bourne Community Center, Room 2
239 Main Street
Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts
Contact: [Nichola Meserve](#) at 617.626.1531

Rhode Island Division of Fish & Wildlife

November 7, 2018 at 6 PM

University of Rhode Island Narragansett Bay Campus
Corless Auditorium
South Ferry Road
Narragansett, Rhode Island
Contact: [Robert Ballou](#) at 401.222.4700 ext. 4420

Connecticut Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection

November 5, 2018 at 7 PM

DEEP Marine Headquarters
Boating Education Center, Building 3
333 Ferry Road
Old Lyme, Connecticut
Contact: [Justin Davis](#) at 860.447.4322

New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation

November 27, 2018 at 6:30 PM

Division of Marine Resources
205 North Belle Mead Road, Suite 1
East Setauket, New York
Contact: [Maureen Davidson](#) at 631.444.0483

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

November 26, 2018 at 6 PM

Stafford Township Administrative Office
260 East Bay Avenue
Manahawkin, New Jersey
Contact: [Joseph Cimino](#) at 609.748.2020

Delaware Dept. of Natural Resources & Environmental Control

November 8, 2018 at 6 PM

DNREC Auditorium
89 Kings Highway
Dover, Delaware
Contact: [John Clark](#) at 302.739.9914

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 Department of Natural Resources

November 15, 2018 at 6 PM

Ocean City Municipal Airport

12724 Airport Road

Berlin, Maryland

Contact: [Steve Doctor](#) at 410.213.1531

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

November 14, 2018 at 6 PM

2600 Washington Avenue

4th Floor Conference Room

Newport News, Virginia

Contact: [Rob O'Reilly](#) at 757.247.2248

The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board approved Draft Addendum XXXI for public comment at the Joint Commission/Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council meeting in Virginia Beach, VA in August 2018, and approved Draft Addendum XXXII yesterday at the Commission's Annual Meeting in New York City.

Draft Addendum XXXI

Draft Addendum XXXI and the Council's complementary framework consider adding the following management options to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan.

1. Conservation equivalency for the recreational black sea bass fishery
2. Conservation equivalency rollover for summer flounder
3. Transit provisions for Block Island Sound for recreational and/or commercial fisheries for all three species
4. Slot limits (not currently a management option in the Council's FMP)

The Draft Addendum aims to increase the suite of tools available for managing summer flounder, scup and black sea bass, as well as reduce inconsistencies between state and federal regulations. This action does not consider implementing black sea bass conservation equivalency or slot limits for any of the three species in 2019. Rather, the options would update the FMPs to allow these management tools to be used in future years.

Draft Addendum XXXII

Draft Addendum XXXII was initiated to establish new recreational management programs for summer flounder and black sea bass, as the current addenda under which the two fisheries are currently managed (Addenda XXVIII and XXX, respectively) expire at the end of 2018. The Draft Addendum proposes two options for each recreational fishery: (1) coastwide management (the default program for both species under the FMP), or conservation equivalency for summer flounder; and (2) setting measures through a specifications process.

The Draft Addendum seeks to address several challenges with the recreational management of summer flounder and black sea bass. Since the adoption of the FMP, shifts in abundance, distribution, and behavior of these two species have created challenges in constraining harvest to the coastwide recreational harvest limit (RHL) while providing fair and equitable access to fishermen throughout the species' ranges. In addition, the use of highly variable and inherently delayed annual harvest estimates to establish management measures for the subsequent year has led to regulatory instability, regulatory disparities, and frustration on the part of stakeholders.

Setting measures through specifications would be a procedural change, allowing regional management to reflect the current condition and distribution of the stocks and fisheries, and enabling measures to be established based on more complete harvest data rather than preliminary projections. This process would eliminate the need for measures to be established through addenda; instead, the Board would approve measures in the late winter or early spring each year, based on technical committee analysis of harvest estimates and other information on resource availability. Public input on specifications would be gathered by states through their individual public comment processes. For each species, the Draft Addendum also includes proposed standards and guiding principles to structure how measures are set in order to provide fair and equitable access to the resource, and increase regulatory stability.

Interested groups are encouraged to provide input on Draft Addenda XXXI and XXXII either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. Draft Addenda are available at http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/SF_Scup_BSB_DraftAddendumXXXI_PublicComment_Oct2018.pdf and http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/SF_BSB_DraftAddendumXXXII_PublicComment_Oct2018.pdf. They can also be accessed on the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) under Public Input. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on **November 28, 2018** and should be forwarded to Caitlin Starks, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201; 703.842.0741 (fax) or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Draft Addendum XXXI and XXXII Comment).

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