



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species, or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ASMFC & Mid-Atlantic Council Approve 2012 Specifications for Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass and Bluefish

Wilmington, DE – The Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) have established the 2012 commercial quotas and recreational harvest limits for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish. The Commission's actions are final and apply to state waters. The Council will be forwarding its recommendations to NOAA's Northeast Regional Administrator for final approval. The table below summarizes those actions/recommendations (commercial quota and recreational harvest limits are in millions of pounds):

Species	Commercial Quota	Commercial Minimum Fish Size (TL)	Commercial Mesh Size	Recreational Harvest Limit
Summer Flounder	18.95	14"	5.5"	12.63
Scup	34.43	9"	5"	10.85
Black Sea Bass	1.76	11"	4.5"	1.36
Bluefish	10.5	---	---	17.19

The Commission approved and Council recommended a 7% increase in the summer flounder harvest limits from 2011 using the process detailed in the recently approved Annual Catch Limit and Accountability Measure Amendment. The commercial quota was set at 18.95 million pounds and the recreational harvest limit was set at 12.63 million pounds for the 2012 fishing year.

The Commission approved and Council recommended a commercial quota of 34.43 million pounds and a recreational harvest limit of 10.85 million pounds for the scup fishery. These limits are 66% and 86% higher for the commercial and recreational fisheries, respectively, compared to 2011 levels. The Board adopted a new landing limit to not exceed 50,000 pounds per day for the Winter I fishery (January 1-April 30), previously it was a one-week landing limit of 30,000 pounds.

For black sea bass, the Commission approved and Council recommended the same commercial quota as 2011, 1.76 million pounds. However, they recommended a lower limit of 1.36 million pounds for the recreational fishery to address the management uncertainty associated with that fishery. A benchmark

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.

stock assessment for black sea bass will be reviewed in December of this year that will provide an update on the status of the stock.

Finally, the Commission approved and the Council recommended a commercial quota of 10.50 million pounds and a recreational harvest limit of 17.19 million pounds for the bluefish fishery. These levels are about 1% higher compared to the 2011 limits.

For all four species the action was consistent with the recommendations of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) regarding acceptable biological catch (ABC), which is the level of total removals that cannot be exceeded based on the best available scientific information. The Commission and Council maintained the 2011 commercial management measures for all four species for 2012, with the exception of the Winter I landing limit, and approved a Research Set-Aside (RSA) quota of up to three percent for each fishery. Prior to the start of the new fishing year, RSA quota allocations will reduce the above commercial quotas and recreational harvest limits. For more information about summer flounder, scup, or black sea bass, please contact Toni Kerns, FMP Coordinator, at (703) 842-0740 or <tkerns@asmfc.org>. For more information about bluefish, please contact Mike Waine, FMP Coordinator, at (703) 842-0740 or <mwaine@asmfc.org>.

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