



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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ASMFC & MAFMC Approve 2006 TALs for Bluefish, Scup and Black Sea Bass

Philadelphia, PA – The Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) met this week to finalize the total allowable landings (TAL) limits for bluefish, scup and black sea bass, and establish 2006 commercial management measures for the respective fisheries. The TALs are provided below in millions of pounds.

Species	2004 TAL	2005 TAL	2006 TAL
Bluefish	31.9	30.8	24.8
Black Sea Bass	8.0	8.2	8.0
Scup	16.5	16.5	16.27

The 2006 black sea bass quota decreased slightly from 8.2 million pounds in 2005 to 8.0 million pounds, due to a decrease in the survey index used to evaluate the stock. The Commission and Council approved increases in the minimum sizes for circular vents (now set at 2.5" in diameter) and the number of vents in traps and pots. All traps and pots will be required to have at least two vents in the parlor portion of the trap to help increase escapement of sub-legal fish. These changes must be implemented by January 1, 2007.

For scup, the Commission and Council approved a TAL of 16.27 million pounds. Both groups also approved changes to the commercial possession limits for the scup winter II period (November 1 – December 31). Winter II trip limits will increase to 2000 pounds, with an increase of 1500 pounds for every 500,000 pounds of scup transferred from the winter I period (January 1 – April 30) to the winter II period.

While the 2005 bluefish assessment was reviewed and approved by the Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Review Committee, concerns regarding the adequacy of the data led the Commission and the Council to reduce the overall TAL to 24.8 million pounds for bluefish. They set the commercial quota at 9.5 million pounds and the recreational harvest limit at 15.3 million pounds. Further, both groups directed the Bluefish Technical Monitoring Committee to continue working on improving and refining the bluefish stock assessment. The Commission and Council determined the current regulations are sufficient to ensure the new TAL will not be exceeded.

The Commission deferred taking action on the 2006 summer flounder TAL and management measures until its Annual Meeting in late October/early November. The Commission's actions with regards to black sea bass, scup and bluefish are final and apply in state waters. The Council will be forwarding its recommendations to NOAA Fisheries for final approval. For more information, please contact Julie Nygard, FMP Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or <jnygard@asmfc.org>.

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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.

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