



Recreational Fisheries for Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass: Things to Know About....

Recreational Jurisdiction

Summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass are managed jointly by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC; Council) and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board (ASMFC; Board). The Council recommends management measures to NMFS for implementation in federal waters (3-200 miles). The Board adopts measures that each state will implement in state waters (0-3 miles).

Recreational Harvest Limits

A recreational harvest limit, a limit on the amount of fish available to recreational fishermen each year, is recommended by the Council and adopted by the Board for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass. These harvest limits are based on scientific advice and are set to allow for sustainable harvest and, if necessary, stock rebuilding. Decisions on overall fishery removals, commercial quotas, and recreational harvest limits are made by the Council and Board in August of each year.

Reviewing Current Year Recreational Landings

The Council meets with the Board in December to review the current year recreational landings information and make recommendations for recreational measures for these three fisheries. Partial, current year recreational landings are used to estimate what might be landed during the entire year. This projection is then compared to the harvest limit for the upcoming year to determine if any additional restrictions are needed.

Recreational Management Measures

Recreational fishing measures for summer flounder (i.e., minimum fish sizes, fish possession limits, and open seasons) are developed on a coastwide basis (i.e., identical measures state and federal waters) or derived based on state-specific harvest limits (i.e., conservation equivalency). Under conservation equivalency, each state develops measures to achieve their state-specific harvest limits. Recreational fishermen are subject to the regulations in the state in which they land their fish.

While a common set of recreational fishing measures are established for scup in federal waters, the Board develops management measures that are specific for state waters in two regions: MA to NY and NJ to NC. However, federal permit holders must adhere to the federal fishing regulations in both state and federal waters.

For black sea bass, recreational fishing measures are established on a coastwide basis. As such, the management measures in both state and federal waters are identical.