
Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

PRESS RELEASE



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Council and Board Adopt 2011 Recreational Management Measures

Allowable landings increased for Scup

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) met with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Board (Board) on December 15 in Virginia Beach, VA to recommend and adopt recreational management measures for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass. The Council and Board adopted the use of conservation equivalency to achieve the recreational harvest limit for summer flounder in 2011. This harvest limit (11.44 million pounds), approved in August by the Council and Board, represents a 33% increase relative to the limit implemented in 2010. Conservation equivalency would require states to develop and implement state-specific management measures (i.e., possession limits, size limits, and seasons) to achieve the harvest limit for their state.

After considerable discussion of the proposed recreational harvest limit and the status of the scup stock, the Council and Board voted to increase the 2011 Total Allowable Landing Level (TAL) for scup to about 26 million pounds, an increase of 92% relative to the 2010 level. Although the Council and Board had agreed to a lower TAL in August, they agreed the revised TAL recommendation would more effectively accommodate the region's vibrant recreational scup fishery while staying within the maximum sustainable yield for this stock. Based on the associated recreational harvest of 5.74 million pounds, the Council and Board adopted status quo (same as 2010) measures for federal and state waters in 2011 for scup. These measures in federal waters would include a 10 fish possession limit, a 10.5-inch total length (TL) minimum fish size, and an open season July 6 to September 26.

The Council and Board adopted coastwide management measures for the 2011 recreational black sea bass fishery. These include a 13-inch TL minimum fish size, a 25 fish possession limit, and an open season from July 1 to October 1 and November 1 to December 31. The measures will remain in effect for 2011 until the ASMFC approves an addendum to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Plan that implements regional specifications for black sea bass that would achieve the necessary reduction in fishing mortality for 2011. Once the addendum is in place, the Council and Board agreed that management measures in Federal waters would revert to the same measures in place for 2010 - a 12.5-inch TL minimum fish size, 25 fish possession limit, and an open season from May 22 to October 11 and November 1 to December 31.

Mid-Atlantic Council Chairman, Rick Robins, noted that "The Council and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission worked together very effectively to craft measures that would mitigate potentially disruptive impacts within the black sea bass fishery by developing a provisional motion that would enable the Commission to address the geographic variability of the performance in this important recreational fishery. Additionally, our actions this week set the stage for significant and long awaited increases in recreational opportunities in the summer flounder fishery, following a decade of difficult but successful stock rebuilding."

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