



Joint Meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board and Bluefish Management Board

May 6, 2020

The following summary highlights actions taken and issues considered at the joint meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board and Bluefish Management Board on May 6, 2020. This meeting was conducted by webinar due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Presentations, briefing materials, and webinar recordings are available at: <http://www.mafmc.org/briefing/may-2020>.

Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment

The Council met jointly with the ASMFC's Bluefish Management Board (Board) to provide guidance on the development of draft management alternatives for the Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment. First, the Council and Board were presented a summary of public comments received through the supplemental scoping period that occurred in February and March of this year. Next, the Council and Board reviewed Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT) recommendations on the scope of the amendment. The Council and Board determined that the following issues be considered for further development:

- Fishery management plan goals and objectives
- Recreational/commercial allocations
- Commercial allocations to the states
- Recreational/commercial sector transfers
- Commercial state-to-state quota transfers
- Rebuilding plan
- Sector specific management uncertainty
- Separate allocations for the for-hire and private sectors of the recreational fishery
- *De minimis* provision to relieve states from having to adopt recreational fishery regulations

In the coming weeks, the FMAT will meet to discuss the guidance provided by the Council and Board and prepare an initial range of management alternatives. The two management bodies are expected to reconvene jointly via webinar in June to refine draft management alternatives. For more detailed information regarding the amendment process and timeline, visit the bluefish amendment action page:

<https://www.mafmc.org/actions/bluefish-allocation-amendment>

Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment

The Council met jointly with the ASMFC's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board (Board) to discuss the development of draft alternatives for the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Commercial/Recreational Allocation Amendment. The Council and Board reviewed the summary of public comments provided during the Amendment scoping process, comments from the Advisory Panels (APs) on types of alternatives to be considered, and recommendations from the FMAT on the scope of issues to be included in the Amendment. The two bodies then discussed which types of alternatives should be further developed by the FMAT for consideration by the Council and Board at their next joint meeting.

The Council and Board supported exploration of a variety of approaches for potential modifications to the commercial and recreational allocations for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass. These include status quo, allocations based on different data or time series, allocation percentages intended to produce approximately status quo harvest by sector compared to recent years prior to catch limit revisions, separate allocations for the

for-hire and private sectors of the recreational fishery, a “harvest control rule” approach, dynamic allocations, and allocation transfers between sectors. Acknowledging widespread concerns voiced by the public and AP members regarding the recreational data used for management, the Council and Board also supported the development of draft alternatives to address recreational accountability and catch accounting. Finally, both bodies agreed that alternatives to allow the sale of allocations between sectors and allocation set-asides should not be included in this amendment. Based on this feedback, the FMAT will develop a range of draft alternatives for Council and Board review at the next joint meeting, which is expected to occur via webinar in June. For more information regarding the amendment process and timeline visit the amendment action page: <http://www.mafmc.org/actions/sfsbsb-allocation-amendment>.

Next Council Meeting

June 16-18, 2020

This meeting will be conducted by webinar. Updates will be posted in the coming weeks at:

<http://www.mafmc.org/council-events/june-2020-council-meeting>