



MID-ATLANTIC
FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

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Council Recommends Increases for 2012

The Council met last week in Wilmington, DE with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass, and Bluefish Boards to adopt fishery management measures for 2012. Based on their recommendations, the harvest limits for summer flounder, scup, and bluefish could increase if approved by the National Marine Fisheries Service.

At their meeting, the Council recommended harvest limits using the process detailed in the recently approved Annual Catch Limit and Accountability Measure Amendment. Based on the Council's recommendation, the summer flounder quota and harvest limit would increase 7% compared to 2011 levels - the commercial quota would be 18.95 million pounds and the recreational harvest limit 12.63 million pounds for the 2012 fishing year.

The Council also 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.

For black sea bass, the 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.

Finally, 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.

“The Council’s new quota-setting procedures, developed through the Omnibus ACL/AM amendment in response to the reauthorization of the Magnuson Act, were applied for the first time last week and resulted in modest to substantial growth in the quotas of several of the Council’s managed species that are near or above their rebuilding targets,” stated Council Chairman, Rick Robins. “The Black Sea Bass quota remained status quo, and a benchmark stock assessment for this important species is anticipated in December.”