

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

**ADDENDUM XII TO THE SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP,
AND BLACK SEA BASS FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Black Sea Bass Commercial Management



ASMFC Vision Statement:

Healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015.

August 2004

Background

Black sea bass is jointly managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC). The Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for black sea bass was approved in October 1996 by the ASMFC. The MAFMC approved the black sea bass management measures as Amendment 9 to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP) in October 1996.

The original FMP established an annual process of developing commercial quotas, recreational harvest limits, and recreational and commercial management measures. The FMP also established a series of permitting and reporting requirements. The FMP provides that the annual coastwide commercial quota is divided among four quarters. The first quarter runs from January 1 through March 31, the second quarter runs from April 1 through June 30, the third quarter runs from July 1 through September 30, and finally the fourth quarter runs from October 1 through December 31.

The fishery has been subjected to lengthy closures and some significant quota overages in the past 6 years. Fishery closures occurring as a result of filled/exceeded quotas resulted in increased discards of legal sized black sea bass in mixed fisheries for the remainder of the closed period. Significant financial hardship on the part of the fishing industry also resulted due to a decrease in market demand caused by a fluctuating supply. To address these issues, the Management Board enacted a series of Emergency Rules in 2001 establishing initial possession limits, triggers, and adjusted possession limits. While these measures helped reduce the length of fishery closures, the rapidly changing regulations were confusing for fishermen and added significant administrative burden to the states. Addendum VI provided a mechanism for initial possession limits, triggers, and adjusted possession limits to be set during the annual specification setting process without the need for further Emergency Rules.

Amendment 13, approved by the Commission in May 2002, implemented a federal coastwide, annual quota to be managed by the Commission using a state-by-state allocation system for 2003 and 2004. In addition to early closures, possible inequities could have been created by the quota management system as landings shifted to the north. By allocating state shares, the management does not discriminate between residents of different states. The Council adopted a system that would allocate the annual quota on a coastwide basis each year. State-specific shares are as follows: Maine and New Hampshire .5%, Connecticut 1%, Delaware 5%, New York 7%, Rhode Island, North Carolina and Maryland 11%, Massachusetts 13%, New Jersey and Virginia 20%.

Statement of the Problem

An individual state share management program was adopted in 2003 through an amendment that lasted through 2004. This amendment remedied problems with the

commercial black sea bass quarterly quota system. Under this program, states had the responsibility of managing their quota for the greatest benefit of the commercial black sea bass industry in their state. States designed allocation systems based on state specific landing patterns using possession limits and seasons to ensure a continuous and steady supply of product over the season for producers and/or a fair and equitable distribution of black sea bass to all fishermen who have traditionally landed black sea bass in their state. States also had the ability to transfer or combine quota, increasing the flexibility of the system to respond to year-to-year variations in fishing practices or landings patterns. This addendum establishes Black Sea Bass commercial management measures for January 1, 2005 through December 31, 2007 before the current addendum expires on December 31, 2004.

Management

This addendum continues the use of a state-by-state allocation system, managed by the ASMFC on an annual coastwide commercial quota. State-specific shares are as follows: Maine and New Hampshire 0.5%, Connecticut 1%, Delaware 5%, New York 7%, Rhode Island, North Carolina and Maryland 11%, Massachusetts 13%, New Jersey, Virginia 20%, and Pennsylvania 0% (table1).

Appendix

Table 1: State shares of Black Sea Bass as allocated by Amendment 13.

State	Percent of Coastwide Quota
Maine	0.5 %
New Hampshire	0.5 %
Massachusetts	13 %
Rhode Island	11 %
Connecticut	1 %
New York	7 %
New Jersey	20 %
Delaware	5 %
Maryland	11 %
Virginia	20 %
North Carolina	11 %
Pennsylvania	0%