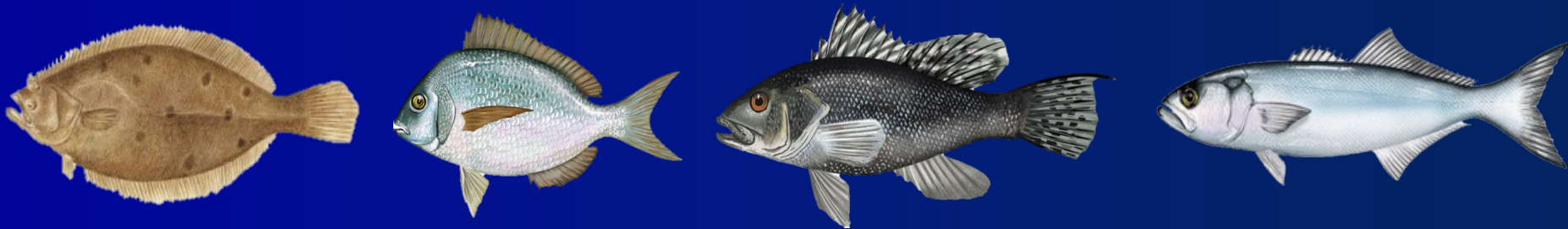




Recreational Sector Separation and Catch Accounting Amendment



Council and ASMFC Policy Board
December 10, 2024

Background

- Initiated in October 2020 as part of Rec. Reform Initiative
- Move to initiate a joint framework/addendum to address the following topics for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish, as discussed today:
 - Better incorporate MRIP uncertainty into management
 - Develop guidelines for maintaining status quo measures
 - Develop a process for setting multi-year measures
 - Consider changes to the timing of federal waters measures recommendations
 - Harvest control rule

and to also **initiate an amendment to address recreational sector separation and recreational catch accounting** such that scoping for the amendment would be conducted during the development of the framework/addendum.

Background

- February 2021: Council and Policy Board chose to prioritize development of Recreational Harvest Control Rule Framework/Addenda and delay scoping for amendment
- December 2023: agreed that amendment development should be resumed in 2024
 - Pushed back to late 2024 due to summer flounder mesh exemptions action
- Included in 2025 priorities for Council and Commission (scoping and development of range of alternatives)

Today's Objectives

- Feedback on draft action plan/timeline
- Consider approval of draft scoping/public information document for scoping in early 2025
 - Alternatively:
 - Provide guidance to FMAT/PDT on further revisions to document – modifications to content and/or action scope?
 - Continue to keep action on hold?
 - Remove from planned projects/priorities?

Action Plan: Amendment Goal

- Consider managing for-hire recreational fisheries separately from other recreational modes (sector separation)
 - Make better use of for-hire reported data, and better account for differing preferences and motivations between for-hire vs. private/shore modes
- Consider options related to recreational data collection and catch estimation, e.g., private angler reporting and enhanced VTR requirements
 - Approaches to improve or supplement recreational data collection and catch estimation processes to reduce recreational management uncertainty

Action Plan: Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT)/ Plan Development Team (PDT)

- Membership recently finalized
- One meeting on November 19, 2024 to review draft scoping document/PID

Name	Agency	Role/Expertise
Tracey Bauer	ASMFC	FMAT/PDT Co-Chair
Chelsea Tuohy	ASMFC	FMAT/PDT Co-Chair
Kiley Dancy	MAFMC	FMAT/PDT Co-Chair
Hannah Hart	MAFMC	FMAT/PDT Co-Chair
Laura Deighan	GARFO	Fisheries policy and legal requirements
Marianne Randall	GARFO	National Environmental Policy Act requirements
Sara Turner	GARFO	Scientific and technical analysis of federal fisheries management
Scott Steinback	NEFSC	Recreational fisheries economist
John Maniscalco	NY DEC	State fisheries management
Corrin Flora	ME DMR	State fisheries management
Matt Ayer	MA DMF	State fisheries management
John Lake	RI DMF	State fisheries management
Craig Weedon	MD DNR	State fisheries management

Action Plan: Tentative Timeline

As of November 2024

Winter 2025	Scoping hearings and comment period
Spring 2025	Council/Board review scoping comments and identify types of alternatives to consider
Summer 2025	Initial development of draft alternatives
Fall/Winter 2025	Council/Board approve a range of alternatives for inclusion in a public hearing document
Winter/Spring 2026	Council and Board approve public hearing document
Spring/Summer 2026	Public hearings
Summer/Fall 2026	Consider document for final action
Winter/Spring 2027	Federal rulemaking and comment periods
Spring/Summer 2027	Effective date of management changes

Purpose of Scoping

- Public input will help to identify major issues to be addressed and potential management approaches to be explored
- Specific management options have not yet been identified, but document lists some ideas that could be explored

**SCOPING DOCUMENT/PID
CONTENT FOR ISSUE 1:
SECTOR SEPARATION**

Issue 1: Sector Separation

- Recreational fisheries for these 4 species include for-hire (i.e., headboats and charter) and a private rec. sectors (i.e., shore and private/rental boats)
- Currently share a single harvest target with performance evaluation and AMs applied collectively; same measures applied in many cases
- However, the two sectors have differing preferences, motivations, operational needs, and reporting requirements

Issue 1: Sector Separation

- Managing the two sectors separately could allow for more tailored management approaches
- However, sector separation would introduce complexity
 - Some concern it could create regulation imbalances and conflicts
 - May also require use of data that is more uncertain when broken down by sector

Issue 1: Sector Separation

Potential Management Approaches



Separate allocations (e.g., separate ACLs, sub-ACLs, harvest limits)



Separate management measures (uniform approaches/guidelines)

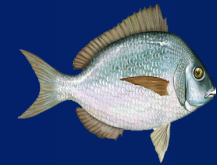


Other approaches identified through scoping

**SCOPING DOCUMENT/PID
CONTENT FOR ISSUE 2:
CATCH ACCOUNTING**

Issue 2: Catch Accounting

- Recreational catch estimation is inherently difficult: open access fisheries, millions of trips/anglers, varying behavior, no reporting requirements for private anglers
- Concerns related to the accuracy, precision, and variability of MRIP data; lack of angler confidence in data
- Interest in exploring options to improve/supplement recreational data for these species



Issue 2: Catch Accounting

Potential Management Approaches



Mandatory recreational reporting



Alternative harvest programs (e.g., tag/stamp programs)



Enhanced for-hire VTR requirements



Voluntary reporting programs



Other approaches identified through scoping

- Should consider lessons learned from previous reports, workshops, etc. on these issues from around the country

MRIP Improvements

- MRIP is still considered best scientific information available for these species; will continue to be used
- Currently NOAA is testing further revisions to effort estimation methodology
 - Pilot study published in 2023 evaluated potential source of bias in FES
 - Large scale follow-up study in 2024; final report expected in 2025
 - If necessary, calibrated historical catch/effort estimates may be produced in 2026 (at the earliest)
 - <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/recreational-fishing-data/effort-survey-improvements>

FMAT/PDT Feedback and Considerations

- Discussed overlap and potential implications of MRIP FES project on this amendment
 - No consensus recommendation, but some members expressed concerns
- Confusion around the term “catch accounting”
 - Some interpret a focus on accountability measures, when intent was focus on data collection and use
 - Staff recommend renaming this amendment to “Recreational Sector Separation and Data Collection Amendment”

FMAT/PDT Feedback and Considerations

- Noted the inherent complexity of the recreational data collection/estimation issue
 - Depending on approach taken, could be a big lift and extend amendment timeline
 - If separated, feasibility of various approaches could be further investigated through a white paper/working group

Discussion

- Does this amendment remain a priority for continued development in 2025?
- Should both issues be taken out for scoping as described in the document?
- Does the proposed timeline seem appropriate?
- Should the amendment name be changed?
- Other feedback on documents?

Options for Next Steps

- Approve the scoping/PID for public comment (with minor changes if needed)
- Provide guidance to the FMAT/PDT on further (more substantive) revisions to the document
- Suspend development until a later date
- Remove this action from Council and Policy Board priorities/planned projects

