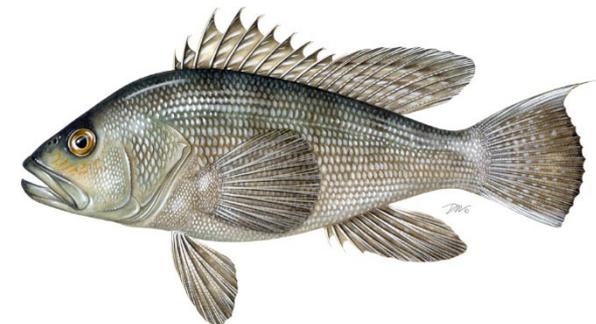
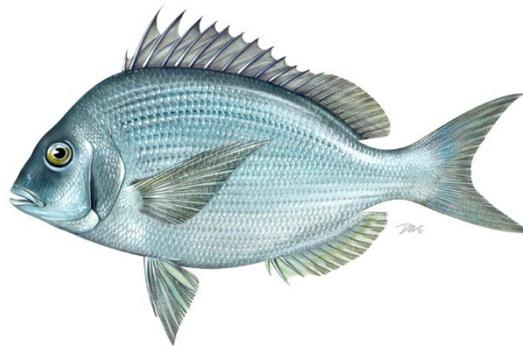
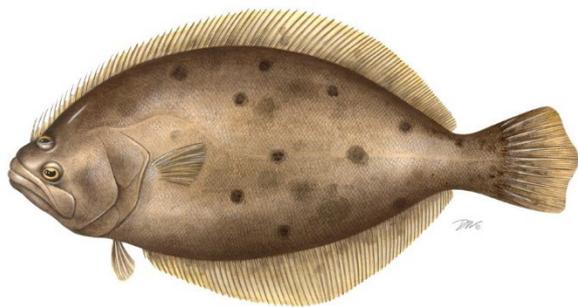


# Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Recreational Management Measure Proposals



Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board  
February 14, 2024

# Presentation Overview



- Background
- 2024-2025 Summer Flounder and Scup Proposed Regional/State Measures and Coastwide Reductions
- 2024 Black Sea Bass Season Adjustments
- Board Actions for Consideration:
  - Consider approval of 2024-2025 recreational management measure options for summer flounder
  - Consider approval of 2024-2025 recreational management measure options for scup
  - Consider approval of 2024 season adjustments for black sea bass



# Summer Flounder and Scup - Background

# December 2023 Joint Board/Council Meeting



- Summer flounder → 28% reduction in expected harvest
- Each state/region adopted conservation equivalency for 2024-2025 summer flounder recreational management
- Board motion from December 2023 specifies that each summer flounder region take a 28% reduction in harvest with the exception of North Carolina

# Summer Flounder Regions - Addendum XXXII



- “[Summer flounder] measures will be developed using a six-region approach, where the regions are defined as: 1) Massachusetts, 2) Rhode Island, 3) Connecticut-New York, 4) New Jersey, 5) Delaware-Virginia, and 6) North Carolina.”
- “Recreational measures for all states within a region will consist of the same minimum size limit, possession limit, and season length.”

# December 2023 Joint Board/Council Meeting



- Scup → 10% reduction in expected harvest
- Removed scup federal waters closure from January 1-April 30 resulting in a year-round open season in federal waters
  - 10% coastwide harvest reduction will be achieved by the states through the Commission process

# Scup Regions



- States *may* work together as regions to submit one proposal per region, provided that the coastwide reduction is 10% or greater
- In 2023, scup regions were defined by the states as: 1) Massachusetts – New York 2) New Jersey 3) Delaware – North Carolina
  - States followed the same regional system for 2024-2025 recreational measures

# Methodology



- Model used: Recreation Demand Model
- Each option has specific summer flounder and scup measures and resulting reductions
  - Summer flounder measures affect the scup reduction and vice versa
- Reductions were calculated at the regional/state level
  - A few sets of **example** options were selected to calculate potential regional and coastwide reductions



# **Proposed 2024-2025 Recreational Measures for Summer Flounder and Scup**



# Northern Region

# Massachusetts Scup Options



SQ

Scup Measures			
Mode	Bag Limit	Minimum Size Limit	Open Season
Private	30	10.5"	5/1-12/31
Shore		9.5"	
For-Hire	40	10.5"	5/1-6/30
	30		7/1-12/31
Private	30	11"	5/1-12/31
Shore		9.5"	
For-Hire	40	11"	5/1-6/30
	30		7/1-12/31
Private	9	10.5"	5/1-12/31
Shore		9.5"	
For-Hire	20	10.5"	5/1-6/30
	9		7/1-12/31
Private	20	11"	4/1-12/31
Shore		10"	
For-Hire	20	11"	4/1-4/30
	40	11"	5/1-6/30
	20		7/1-12/31

# Rhode Island-New York Scup Options



SQ

Scup Measures			
Mode	Bag Limit	Minimum Size Limit	Open Season
Private	30	10.5"	5/1-12/31
Shore		9.5"	
For-Hire	30	10.5"	5/1-8/31
	40		9/1-10/31
	30		11/1-12/31
Private	30	11"	5/1-12/31
Shore		9.5"	
For-Hire	30	11"	5/1-8/31
	40		9/1-10/31
	30		11/1-12/31
Private	9	10.5"	5/1-12/31
Shore		9.5"	
For-Hire	9	10.5"	5/1-8/31
	20		9/1-10/31
	9		11/1-12/31
Private	20	11"	4/1-12/31
Shore		10"	
For-Hire	20	11"	4/1-8/31
	40		9/1-10/31
	20		11/1-12/31

# Massachusetts



- 42 total options
  - 14 summer flounder options
  - 3 scup options
- Summer flounder reductions range from 28.04%-29.08%
  - **Most Liberal Harvest Reduction:** Options 3, 17, 31
  - **Most Conservative Harvest Reduction:** Options 11, 13, 25, 39, 41
- Scup reductions range from 6.74%-13.69%
  - **Most Liberal Harvest Reduction:** Option 7
  - **Most Conservative Harvest Reduction:** Option 42

# Massachusetts Summer Flounder Options



Option(s)	Summer Flounder Measures			
	Mode	Bag Limit	Minimum Size Limit	Open Season
SQ	All	5	16.5"	5/21-9/29
1, 15, 29	Private and For-Hire	5	17.5"	5/24-9/23
	Shore		16.5"	
2, 16, 30	Private and For-Hire	4	17.5"	5/24-9/30
	Shore		16.5"	
3, 17, 31 4, 18, 32 5, 19, 33 6, 20, 34	Private and For-Hire	3	17"	5/24-8/27 6/5-9/2 6/11-9/15 6/18-9/29
	Shore		16.5"	
7, 21, 35 8, 22, 36 9, 23, 37 10, 24, 38	Private and For-Hire	2	16.5"	5/24-8/26 6/5-9/2 6/12-9/15 6/18-9/29
	Shore			
11, 25, 39 12, 26, 40 13, 27, 41 14, 28, 42	For-Hire	5	17.5"	5/24-8/26 6/5-9/2 6/12-9/15 6/18-9/29
	Private and Shore	2	16.5"	

# Rhode Island



- 9 total options
  - 3 summer flounder options
  - 3 scup options
- Summer flounder reductions range from 28.54%-34.43%
  - **Most Liberal Harvest Reduction:** Option 8
  - **Most Conservative Harvest Reduction:** Options 1, 7, 4
- Scup reductions range from 4.69%-15.66%
  - **Most Liberal Harvest Reduction:** Option 2
  - **Most Conservative Harvest Reduction:** Option 6

Option(s)	Summer Flounder Measures		
	Bag Limit	Minimum Size Limit	Open Season
SQ	4	18"	5/3-12/31
1, 4, 7	6	19"	4/1-12/31
2, 5, 8	3	18.5"	6/4-9/15
3, 6, 9	3	18.5"	5/24-8/26

# Rhode Island – Shore Program



- Proposal for all options to maintain special shore sites for summer flounder
- 7-designated shore sites which allow for a minimum size of 17” for two fish
- Estimate of harvest from **ALL** shore sites (cumulative through wave 5):

Year	Shore Harvest (lbs)	PSE Shore	Total Harvest
2022	35	128.1	330,908
2023	11,219	75.4	299,732

# Connecticut-New York



- 18 total options
  - 6 summer flounder options
  - 3 scup options
- Summer flounder reductions range from 28.20%-36.52%
  - **Most Liberal Harvest Reduction:** Options 4-6, 16-18
  - **Most Conservative Harvest Reduction:** Options 13-15
- Scup reductions range from 10.39%-12.79%
  - **Most Liberal Harvest Reduction:** Option 11
  - **Most Conservative Harvest Reduction:** Options 1, 16

# Connecticut-New York



Option(s)	Summer Flounder Measures			
	Mode	Bag Limit	Minimum Size Limit	Dates of Open Season
SQ	All	4	18.5"	5/1-10/9
1, 2, 3	All	3	19"	5/1-9/8
4, 5, 6	All	3	19"	5/4-9/14
7, 8, 9	All	3	19"	5/17-9/20
10, 11, 12	All	3	19"	5/1-7/24
				8/4-10/9
13, 14, 15	All	4	19.5"	4/1-10/31
16, 17, 18	All	3	18.5"	6/12-8/28



# New Jersey

# New Jersey



Option	Summer Flounder Measures				Reduction in Summer Flounder Harvest	Scup Measures				Reduction in Scup Harvest
	Mode	Bag Limit	Minimum Size Limit	Open Season		Mode	Bag Limit	Minimum Size Limit	Open Season	
SQ	All	2	17-18"	5/2-9/27	N/A	All	30	10"	8/1-12/31	N/A
		1	18"							
1	All	3	17.5"	5/24-9/4	<b>-28.02%</b>	All	30	10"	1/1-6/30	<b>-10.08%</b>
									8/27-12/31	
2	All	1	17-18"	6/4-8/31	<b>-28.98%</b>	All	30	10"	1/1-6/30	-10.58%
		2	18"						8/27-12/31	
3	All	3	18"	5/4-9/25	-28.19%	All	30	10"	1/1-6/30	-11.54%
									9/1-12/31	
4	All	1	17-18"	5/10-6/30	-28.78%	All	30	10"	1/1-6/30	<b>-12.11%</b>
		1	18"							
		3	18"	7/1-9/15					9/1-12/31	
5	For-Hire and Private	3	18"	5/16-9/23	-28.52%	All	30	10"	1/1-6/30	-11.65%
	Shore								2	
6	All	1	17.5"	5/26-9/13	-28.13%	All	30	10"	1/1-6/30	-12.09%
		2	18"						9/1-12/31	

# New Jersey – Special Regulations



- New Jersey will maintain special regulations as in previous years:
  - Delaware Bay → 17” minimum size limit & 3 fish possession limit
  - Shore site on Island Beach State Park → 16” minimum size limit & 2 fish possession
  - Both special locations will follow the New Jersey coastwide season when determined in March 2024



# Southern Region

# Southern Region Scup Options



- Scup Southern Region → Delaware-North Carolina
- Scup proposal includes:
  - Status quo scup measures – 40 fish (30 in VA), year round open season, 9” minimum size
  - Bag limit reduction of 5 fish – 35 fish (30 in VA), year round open season, 9” minimum size
- Scup reduction = 0% from DE-NC
  - RDM unable to pick up scup harvest south of New Jersey

# Delaware-Virginia



- 14 total options
  - 7 summer flounder options
  - 2 scup options
- Summer flounder reductions range from 28.01%-33.53%
  - **Most Liberal Harvest Reduction: NEW OPTIONS**
  - **Most Conservative Harvest Reduction: Options 6, 7**

# Delaware-Virginia



Option	Summer Flounder Measures		
	Bag Limit	Minimum Size Limit	Season
SQ	4	16"	1/1-12/31
1, 8	4	17"	1/1-9/21
2, 9	4	17"	5/8-12/31
3, 10	3	17"	5/2-12/31
4, 11	2	17"	1/1-8/10
	4		8/11-12/31
5, 12	4	17"	1/1-5/31
	2		6/1-12/31
6, 7	4	17.5"	1/1-12/31

# Delaware-Virginia



## NEW OPTION

Option	Summer Flounder Measures		
	Bag Limit	Minimum Size Limit	Season
SQ	4	16"	1/1-12/31
New	4	16"	1/1-5/31
		17.5"	6/1-12/31

# North Carolina



- North Carolina was exempt from taking further summer flounder reductions
  - North Carolina manages multiple flounder species under a single set of regulations which are very restrictive in an effort to rebuild the southern flounder stock

Option	Summer Flounder Measures			Reduction in Summer Flounder Harvest
	Bag Limit	Minimum Size Limit	Season	
1, 2	1	15"	8/16-9/30	3.50%

# Coastwide Reduction



- Due to the number of options submitted, preliminary coastwide reductions calculated from:
  - **Example** sets of measures (meeting materials)
  - Most liberal summer flounder harvest reduction measures and corresponding scup measures and vice versa for scup
  - Most conservative summer flounder harvest reduction measures and corresponding scup measures and vice versa for scup

# Coastwide Reduction



- Most liberal **summer flounder** harvest reduction measures and corresponding scup measures

State	Option	Reduction in Summer Flounder Harvest	Reduction in Scup Harvest
MA	31	-28.04%	-13.65%
RI	8	-28.39%	-9.16%
CT-NY	6	-28.20%	-11.79%
NJ	1	-28.02%	-10.08%
DE-VA	1	-28.19%	0.00%
NC	1	3.57%	0.00%
<b>Total Reduction</b>		<b>-28.09%</b>	<b>-11.46%</b>

# Coastwide Reduction



- Most conservative **summer flounder** harvest reduction measures and corresponding scup measures

State	Option	Reduction in Summer Flounder Harvest	Reduction in Scup Harvest
MA	41	-29.08%	-13.68%
RI	7	-34.43%	-9.18%
CT-NY	15	-36.52%	-11.89%
NJ	2	-28.98%	-10.58%
DE-VA	6	-33.53%	0.00%
NC	1	3.57%	0.00%
<b>Total Reduction</b>		<b>-32.70%</b>	<b>-11.54%</b>

# Coastwide Reduction



- Most liberal **scup** harvest reduction measures and corresponding summer flounder measures

State	Option	Reduction in Summer Flounder Harvest	Reduction in Scup Harvest
MA	7	-28.53%	-6.74%
RI	2	-28.62%	-4.69%
CT-NY	10	-28.38%	-11.92%
NJ	1	-28.02%	-10.08%
DE-VA	1	-28.19%	0.00%
NC	1	3.57%	0.00%
<b>Total Reduction</b>		<b>-28.18%</b>	<b>-9.96%</b>

# Coastwide Reduction



- Most conservative **scup** harvest reduction measures and corresponding summer flounder measures

State	Option	Reduction in Summer Flounder Harvest	Reduction in Scup Harvest
MA	42	-28.85%	-13.69%
RI	7	-34.43%	-9.18%
CT-NY	15	-36.52%	-11.89%
NJ	4	-28.78%	-12.11%
DE-VA	6	-33.53%	0.00%
NC	1	3.57%	0.00%
<b>Total Reduction</b>		<b>-32.62%</b>	<b>-11.57%</b>

# Next Steps



**February 14, 2024**

- Board action for consideration: Final approval of proposed summer flounder and scup recreational management measure options for the 2024-2025 fishing years

**March 20, 2024**

- States/regions to notify ASMFC staff of final measures selected for implementation

**Spring 2024**

- ASMFC staff submits final state recreational summer flounder and scup measures to GARFO – April 1, 2024
- States implement selected measures through 2025



# **Black Sea Bass Season Adjustments**



## Minor 2024 Season Adjustments Requirements

- Black sea bass harvest after season adjustments must be equal or less than the status quo harvest estimated by the RDM
- Summer flounder and scup reductions in 2024-2025 cannot be used to account for adjustments to the black sea bass 2024 season

# Black Sea Bass Season Adjustments



	Option	Mode	Bag Limit	Minimum Size Limit	Season	Reduction
Massachusetts	Status Quo	All	4	16.5	5/20-9/7	-
	Proposed	All	4	16.5	5/ <b>18</b> -9/ <b>3</b>	-0.75%

	Option	Mode	Bag Limit	Minimum Size Limit	Season	Reduction
Connecticut	Status Quo	For-Hire	5	16	5/19-8/31	-
			7		9/1-12/31	
		Private/Shore	5		5/19-6/23, 7/8-12/1	
	Proposed	For-Hire	5	16	5/ <b>18</b> -8/31	-0.14%
			7		9/1-12/31	
		Private/Shore	5		5/ <b>18</b> -6/23, 7/8- <b>11/28</b>	

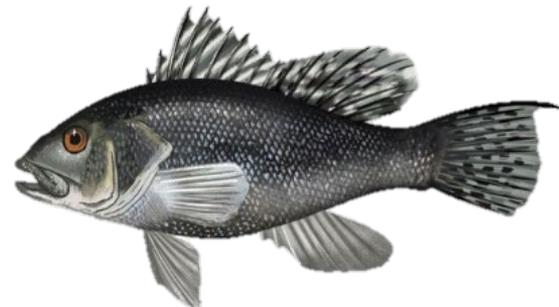
# BSB Virginia February Fishery



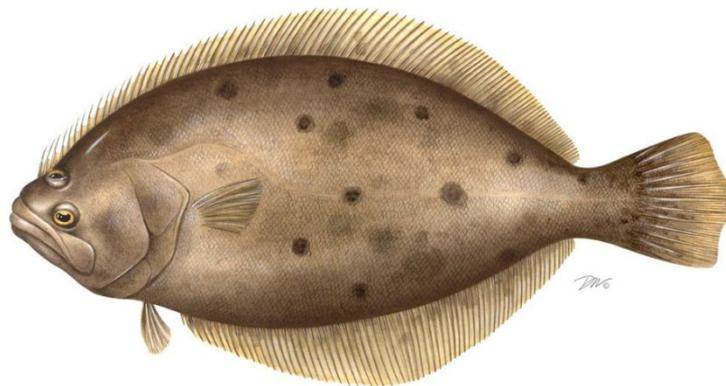
- VMRC voted to open the February recreational black sea bass season for February 1-29, 2024.



Questions?



# Summer Flounder Commercial Mesh Exemptions



Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board  
February 14, 2024

# Presentation Overview



- Background
  - 2023 Council and Board Meetings
  - Summer Flounder Small Mesh Exemption Program
  - Summer Flounder Flynet Exemption
- Potential Action Timeline
- ***Board Action for Consideration:*** Initiate an Addendum to address summer flounder commercial mesh exemptions.

# Background



- In 2023 Council staff and a Council contractor evaluated and solicited feedback on summer flounder commercial mesh regulations including:
  - 5.5” diamond and 6” square minimum mesh size
  - Small Mesh Exemption Program (SMEP)
  - Flynet exemption
- Board and Council received a presentation on the results of Council staff/contractor work and public feedback in December 2023
  - Board and Council recommended no change to the current summer flounder minimum mesh sizes

# Background



## **Joint Board and Council Meeting – December 2023:**

- “Move to consider as a potential 2024 priority a framework adjustment/addendum to clarify the definition of a flynet and to consider moving the western boundary of the small-mesh exemption area. The intent of this framework/addendum is for possible implementation by November 1, 2024.”

## **Council Only – December 2023:**

- Removed the Scup Gear Restricted Area (GRA) Framework from the 2024 implementation plan replacing it with the summer flounder commercial mesh exemptions Framework

## **Business Session of the Commission – January 2024:**

- Addition to 2024 Action Plan – “Develop an Addendum in collaboration with MAFMC to address the flynet definition and boundaries of the small-mesh exemption area”

# Small Mesh Exemption Program



- **Implementation:** Initially developed under Amendment 2 and modified under Amendment 3 to the Fishery Management Plan (FMP)
- **Exemption Purpose:** Allow vessels to retain some bycatch of summer flounder while operating in other small-mesh fisheries

# Small Mesh Exemption Program



- **Exemption:** Vessels fishing east of longitude 72°30.0'W November 1 -April 30, and using mesh smaller than 5.5-inch diamond or 6.0-inch square, may land more than 200 pounds of summer flounder.
  - Vessels cannot fish west of the line while participating in the program
- **Utilization:** Vessel participation in the program has remained stable over time (~75 Letters of Authorization issued annually)

# Small Mesh Exemption Program

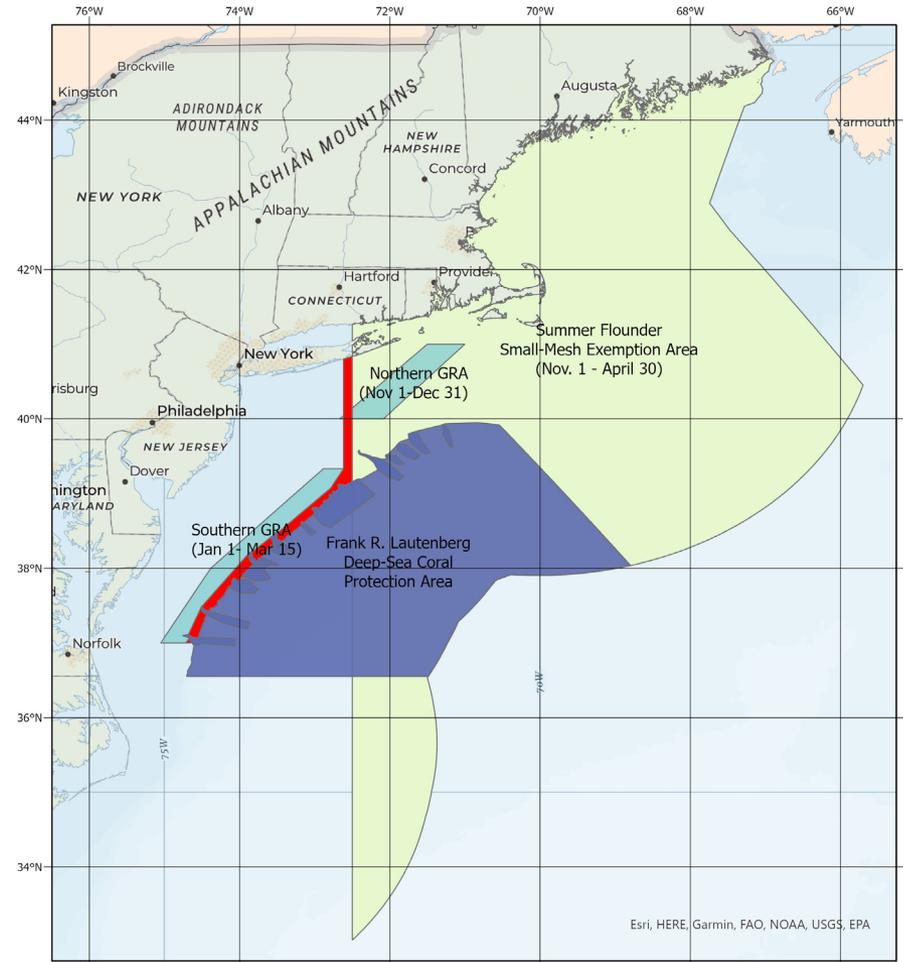
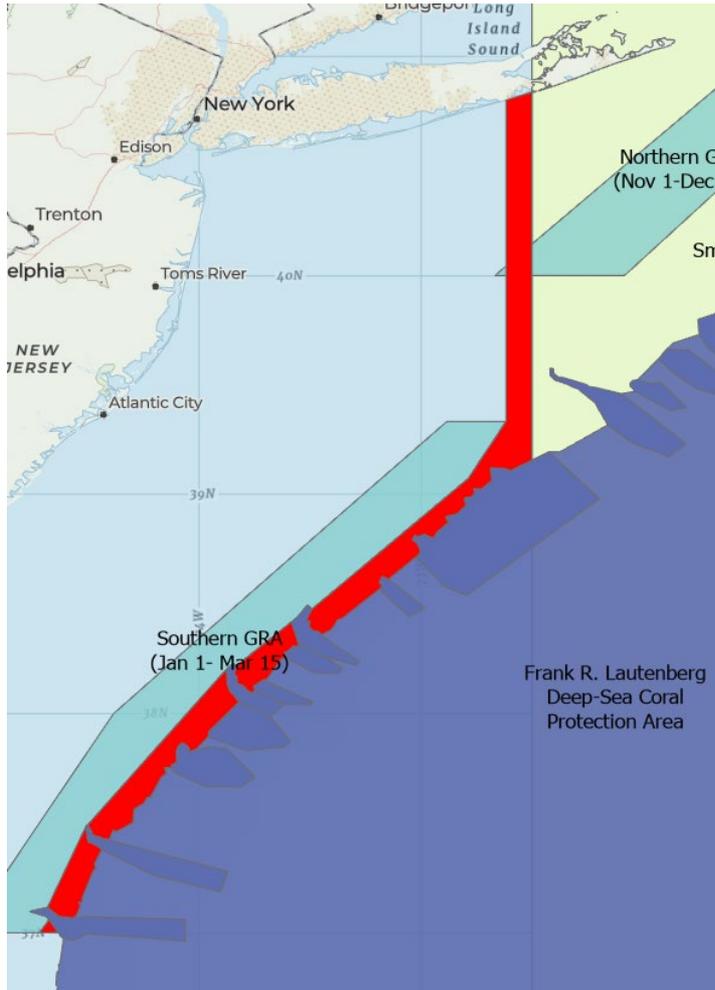


- **Industry-proposed change:** Move the SMEP line approximately 5 miles westward to align with the northeast corner of the scup Southern GRA
- **Technical Committee and Monitoring Committee Recommendation:**
  - Conduct additional analysis on the industry-proposed change to the SMEP area and the potential biological impacts to summer flounder .
  - Explore potential to update evaluation methods to avoid relying solely on observer data to estimate summer flounder catches

# Small Mesh Exemption Program



 = Additional area (1,901 mi<sup>2</sup>)



# Flynet Exemption



- **Implementation:** Amendment 2 (1993)
- **Exemption Purpose:**
  - Vessels fishing with a two-seam otter trawl flynet are exempt from the summer flounder minimum mesh size requirements
  - Accommodate fisheries targeting other species and catching limited amounts of summer flounder (particularly in Delaware-North Carolina)

# Flynet Exemption



## **Exemption:**

Vessels fishing in the fly net fishery are exempt from the minimum mesh size requirement. A fly net is a two seam otter trawl with the following configuration:

- a) The net has large mesh webbing in the wings with a stretch mesh measure of 8" to 64".
- b) The first body (belly) section of the net consists of 35 meshes or more of 8" (stretch mesh) webbing or larger.
- c) In the body section of the net the stretch mesh decreases in size relative to the wings and continues to decrease throughout the extensions to the cod end, which generally has a webbing of 2" (stretch mesh).

# Flynet Exemption



## Industry-proposed changes:

- Update the definition of a flynet to reflect current practices:
  - Remove the two-seam otter trawl requirement and replace language with “at least two-seams”
  - Remove the upper limit of the large mesh webbing in the wings requirement (64 inches) so it reads “greater than 8 inches”
  - Add “Highrise” to the flynet definition
  - Remove number of meshes requirement in the belly of the net (“35 or more”)

# Flynet Exemption



- **Technical Committee and Monitoring Committee Comments and Recommendation:**
  - Exemption is not being used for the fishery or area it was designed for
  - Regulatory definition update is needed to reflect changes in fisheries and gear, but need to examine if this will codify existing practices or expand use of exemption
  - Consider how to evaluate use of exemption in the future

# Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT)



FMAT/PDT Member Name	Agency	Role/Expertise
Kiley Dancy	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council	FMAT/PDT Co-Chair
Chelsea Tuohy	Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission	FMAT/PDT Co-Chair
Hannah Hart	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council	FMAT/PDT Co-Chair
Laura Deighan	NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office	Fisheries Policy and Legal Requirements
Emily Keiley	NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office	Fisheries Policy and Legal Requirements
Marianne Randall	NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office	National Environmental Policy Act Requirements
Sara Turner	NMFS Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office	Analysis and Program Support
Sam Truesdell	NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center	Population Dynamics
Debra Duarte	NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center	Fisheries Monitoring and Research Division
TBD	TBD	Gear Expertise (Consult as needed)

# Summer Flounder Commercial Mesh Exemption Action Draft Timeline



February 14, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Board initiates Addendum to address the summer flounder flynet definition and boundaries of the summer flounder SMEP area</li></ul>
February-March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Development of range of alternatives and draft document for Meeting 1</li></ul>
<b>April 9-11, 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Framework/Addendum Meeting 1: Approve the range of alternatives &amp; Board approves draft document for public hearings</li></ul>
April-May, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public comment period and optional public hearings</li><li>• FMAT/PDT and AP meetings to provide input to Council and Board prior to final action</li></ul>
<b>June 4-6, 2024</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Framework/Addendum Meeting 2: Final Action</li></ul>
November 1, 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Effective date of implemented changes</li></ul>



Questions?

