

**DRAFT ADDENDUM XXVI TO THE INTERSTATE FISHERY
MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP, AND BLACK
SEA BASS**

PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARIES

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
January 6, 2015	Old Lyme, CT
January 7, 2015	Narragansett, RI
January 8, 2015	Sagamore, MA
January 12, 2015	Toms River, NJ
January 13, 2015	Berlin, MD
January 14, 2015	Newport News, VA
January 15, 2015	Dover, DE
January 22, 2015	East Setauket, NY

January 2015

PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY
Draft Addendum XXVI to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass the Interstate Fishery
Management Plan

Connecticut
CT DEEP Marine Headquarters Education Center
Old Lyme, Connecticut

1/6/2015

Public Attendance: see sign-in sheet (14 members of the public)

State and ASMFC Personnel:

Dave Simpson (CT DEEP; ASMFC Commissioner)

Matthew Gates (CT DEEP)

Greg Wojcik (CT DEEP)

Rep Craig Miner (ASMFC Commissioner)

Summary:

The Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, Marine Fisheries Division held a public hearing on Draft Amendment XXVI to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass. David Simpson, Director of the Marine Fisheries Division, reviewed the amendment process and summarized the purpose of the Amendment and the ASMFC management background.

Five people spoke in favor of continuing regional management of the recreational summer flounder fishery. Most felt that it would be helpful to have RI in the region with CT, NY & NJ but that having CT with NY and NJ was critical to the success of regional management. Regional management could be approved for two years if harvest is monitored to ensure that regional management is working and we are not being penalized for participation in it. Most attendees were party boat or charter boat operators and felt that option 4b was favorable. This option allows for a longer season (specifically more days open in early May) at the expense of a ½ inch increase in minimum size. None spoke in favor of the status quo (conservation equivalency).

PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY

Draft Addendum XXVI to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass the Interstate Fishery Management Plan

Rhode Island

*Corliss Auditorium
University of Rhode Island
South Ferry Rd
Narragansett, Rhode Island*

1/7/2015

Public Attendance: see sign-in sheet (12 members of the public)

State and ASMFC Personnel:

Kirby Rootes-Murdy (ASMFC)

Bob Ballou (RI DFW; ASMFC Commissioner)

Jason McNamee (RI DFW)

Rick Bellavance (ASMFC Proxy Commissioner)

Summary:

Five members of the public provided public comment. These individuals all indicated their preference for continuing Adaptive Regional Management (Option 2), specifically Regional Management Option 1: Status Quo. Reasons offered for this preferred option included a belief that the adaptive regional management approach was effective in 2014, that it came close to keeping the coastwide harvest to the Recreational Harvest Limit, and that altering the regional alignment significantly may affect the ability of the states collectively to constrain harvest coastwide. Other reasons cited included concern over the use of the Marine Information Program (MRIP) for monitoring harvest and evaluating the effectiveness of management and as well as need to provide consistency to management measures for more than one year. Two individuals specifically stated their opposition to regional option 2, with one indicating that if the Board were to choose any of regional options 3-5 that their preference would be for "A" suboption (maintaining Rhode Island as separate state region).

In stating a preferred timeframe, three individuals indicated their preference of using the management approach for 2015 with the possibility of extending it into 2016 (Option 2). Two individuals stated their preference for the management approach to be utilized for just 2015.



Paul J. Diodati
Director

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

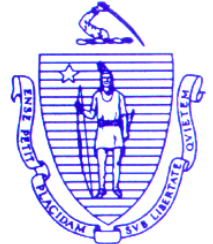
Division of Marine Fisheries

251 Causeway Street, Suite 400

Boston, Massachusetts 02114

(617)626-1520

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Charles D. Baker
Governor

Matthew A. Beaton
Secretary

Mary-Lee King
Interim Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

TO: ASMFC Fluke Management Board
FROM: David Pierce, Chairman
DATE: January 13, 2015
RE: ADDENDUM 26 PUBLIC HEARING: MASSACHUSETTS

Addendum 26 was aired at a public hearing in Sagamore on the Cape Cod Canal. Four fishermen were in attendance along with ASMFC Commissioner William Adler and Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission (MFAC) member Raymond Kane. ASMFC advisor and MFAC member Joseph Huckemeyer offered his opinion. Board Chairman David Pierce handled the proceedings and described the Addendum.

Important for all to understand at the hearing was the lack of penalty for the Commonwealth due to our catching (presumably) 113,993 fluke (through wave 5) versus a 2014 Massachusetts' "regional" harvest amount of 32,936 fish. Care had to be taken to explain that our 2014 "allocation" was not a "take-away," i.e., a reallocation of fish away from Massachusetts to other states (notably the CT-NJ region). This was not easy to explain. Some wondered if it was a sort of legerdemain. I referenced the bold-faced text on page 7 of the Addendum.

Fishermen were reminded that the coastwide allocation (RHL) had to be exceeded and Massachusetts would have had to exceed the allocation we would have received using 1998 as the baseline (133,195 fish) (1998 proportion of harvest by state applied to the 2014 RHL). As of wave 5, Massachusetts was well below the baseline (Table 2 in Addendum), and wave 6 fluke were expected to be insignificant in our state.

I indicated it was likely the Board would duplicate 2014 in 2015 except that NJ and Delaware had a problem with shared Delaware Bay (different rules for each state's fishermen), so the Board especially would have to grapple with options specific to that shared area. I also highlighted we wouldn't have a tally of total coastwide harvest until later this winter/early spring – an unfortunate but typical circumstance.

In response, we were asked what would happen to NY and NJ if the RHL was exceeded and each state exceeded its 1998-based harvest target (NY at 426,223 fish and NJ at 946,892 fish). It was noted that NY through Wave 5 had caught (preliminary) 515,830 fish, and NJ had caught

1,151,351 fish. Consequently, whether the RHL is exceeded takes on great importance for those two states in particular.

I provided the following answer: if the 2014 RHL of 2,383,206 fish is exceeded, then NY's catch of 515,830 + fish (Wave 6 not yet considered) will be compared to its 1998-allocated amount of 426,223 fish. Similarly, NJ's catch of 1,151,351 + fish (Wave 6 excluded) will be compared against 946,892 fish.

Both states have considerable projected overages; therefore, their 2015 fate hinges on 2014 harvest coast-wide. Was it exceeded? Through Wave 5 total harvest was 2,336,934 fish (Table 2).

It appears the RHL will be exceeded. For Wave 6 there is only **46,272 fish remaining!** Consequently, NY and NJ (including CT in the same region) will have a large penalty to pay for not being conservative enough in their collective approach for 2014. I noted that all Board members were warned by me, as Chairman, at the beginning of 2014 that much was at stake for NY and NJ (including CT) if they weren't very cautious in selecting their recreational measures for 2014. Apparently, they weren't. I informed hearing attendees that most Board members (especially NY) early in 2014 were confident that allowing NY and NJ to adopt the same measures (against NJ's objection) would not cause the RHL to be exceeded. Apparently, it was an unrealistic expectation.

All present in Sagamore were quite concerned that allowing NY and NJ fishermen (growing numbers, according to one fisherman aware of trends in NY) to catch far more than their 1998-based allocations had an effect on fluke availability to recreational fishermen in Massachusetts waters, i.e., availability was down, and abundance was lowered dramatically. Fishermen stressed that they faced a growing population of seals at the south and eastern entrance of Nantucket Sound so there was a double-whammy: still too much fishing pressure to the west and too many predators to the east. These fishermen didn't want a repeat of 2014 in 2015 and beyond.

Addendum regional options proved to be a bit confusing because size limits, possession limits, and length of season by state were only examples. Those present did not support options that would reduce Massachusetts bag limits, increase our minimum size, or shorten our 2014 season, i.e., options 2 or 3. Other options keep Massachusetts at 16", 5 fish, and 132 days. They also keep Massachusetts as a separate region.

PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY

Draft Addendum XXVI to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass the Interstate Fishery Management Plan

New Jersey

*Toms River Township Admin Building
33 Washington St
Toms River, New Jersey*

1/12/2015

Public Attendance: see sign-in sheet (12 members of the public)

State and ASMFC Personnel:

Kirby Rootes-Murdy (ASMFC)

Tom Fote (ASMFC Commissioner)

Tom Baum (NJ DFW)

Brandon Muffley (NJ DFW)

Adam Nowlasky (ASMFC Proxy Commissioner)

Peter Clarke (NJ DFW)

Summary:

Eight members of the public provided public comment. All indicated their preference for continuing Adaptive Regional Management (Option 2), specifically Regional Management Option 5A: creating a Delaware Bay specific region. Reasons offered for this option were a more favorable set of regulations for both New Jersey and Delaware Bay anglers, as well as it being perceived as a more favorable divide of New Jersey. While offering regional management 5A as the preferred option, one individual indicated a secondary preference for returning to state-by-state management, while another suggested that New Jersey become its own region. Reasons offered for both of these cited the estimated harvest New Jersey has relative to the rest of the other states in the management unit. All attendees indicated their preference for an 18 inch minimum size limit, regardless of which regional management option is chosen.

In stating a preferred timeframe, all eight individuals indicated their preference of using the management approach for 2015 only (Option 1).

PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY

Draft Addendum XXVI to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass the Interstate Fishery Management Plan

Maryland

*Ocean Pines Library
11107 Cathell Rd
Berlin, Maryland*

1/13/2015

Public Attendance: see sign-in sheet (2 members of the public)

State and ASMFC Personnel:

Kirby Rootes-Murdy (ASMFC)

Steve Doctor (MD DNR)

Summary:

One member of the public provided public comment, indicating their preference for continuing Adaptive Regional Management (Option 2), specifically Regional Management Option 2: Inclusion of Rhode Island in the Northern Region. Reasons offered for this preferred option included a belief that the adaptive regional management approach was effective in 2014, that maintaining the 2014 management measures for the southern region (DE-VA) was preferred. In stating a preferred timeframe, the individual indicated their preference of using the management approach for 2015 with the possibility of extending it into 2016 (Option 2).

PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY

Draft Addendum XXVI to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass the Interstate Fishery Management Plan

Virginia

*VMRC Building
2600 Washington Ave.
Newport News, Virginia*

1/14/2015

Public Attendance: see sign-in sheet (1 members of the public)

State and ASMFC Personnel:

Kirby Rootes-Murdy (ASMFC)

Sally Roman (VMRC)

Rob O'Reilly (VMRC)

Summary:

One member of the public provided public comment, indicated their preference for the FMP Status Quo, State-by-State conservation equiency. Reasons cited were concern over how coastwide overages of the Recreational Harvest Limit would be dealt with as there were not specific rules for how such an event would be handled under regional management.

PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY

Draft Addendum XXVI to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass the Interstate Fishery
Management Plan

Delaware

DNREC Auditorium

89 Kings Highway

Dover, Delaware

1/15/2015

Public Attendance: see sign-in sheet (15 members of the public)

State and ASMFC Personnel:

Kirby Rootes-Murdy (ASMFC)

John Clark (DNREC; ASMFC Commissioner)

Stewart Michels (DNREC)

Roy Miller (ASMFC Commissioner)

Summary:

10 members of the public provided public comment, indicated their preference for either continuing regional option 1 (regional management status quo) or regional option 2 (inclusion of Rhode Island in the northern region) for 2015. Reasons cited for this were concerns over how enforcement would be carried out for regional options 3-5. Other reasons cited included concerns over allowing more lenient management measures for New Jersey, the possibility of creating boating and parking congestion within certain areas of the state if region options 4-5 were approved. One member of the public from New Jersey offered their preference for regional option 4.

In stating preference for timetable, all individuals indicated a preference of regional options 1 or 2, also noted a preference for using the management approach for 2015 with the possibility of extending it into 2016 (Option 2). One individual stated their preference for the management approach to be utilized for just 2015 if regional options 3-5 were approved instead.

PUBLIC HEARING SUMMARY
Draft Addendum XXVI to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass the Interstate Fishery
Management Plan

New York
NYSDEC
201 Belle Meade Rd
East Setuaket, New York

1/22/2015

Public Attendance: see sign-in sheet (14 members of the public)

State and ASMFC Personnel:

Kirby Rootes-Murdy (ASMFC)

Jim Gilmore (NYSDEC)

John Maniscalco (NYSDEC)

Summary:

Seven members of the public provided public comment. Three individuals indicated their preference for continuing Adaptive Regional Management (Option 2), specifically Regional Management Option 4: Including Delaware Bay with the Southern Region. Reasons offered for this preferred option included a belief that the adaptive regional management approach was effective in 2014, and that regional Option 4 included management measures with a longer season. One individual was in favor of 4A, and another was in favor 4B, and the third was indifferent to which either version (A or B). Other individuals indicated their preference for continuing Adaptive regional management as well, either offering a continuation of status quo regions or regional option 5A. Reasons cited in favor of region 5A were the possibility of a longer season.

In stating a preferred for timeframe, all seven individuals indicated their preference of using the management approach for 2015 with the possibility of extending it into 2016 (Option 2).

Public Hearing Comments on ASMFC Draft Addendum XXVI to the Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass FMP: Summer Flounder Recreational Management in 2015

State	MA	RI	CT	NY	NJ	DE	MD	VA	Total Support
	Option 1: Status Quo, Conservation Equivalency								
								1	1
	Option 2: Adaptive Regional Management								
									53
	Regional Option 1: Regional approach of 2014								
	4	3				10			17
	Regional Option 2: regions are MA, RI-NJ, DE-VA, and NC								
						10	1		11
	Regional Option 3: Split New Jersey								
Total Option									0
3A Option									0
3B Option									0
	Regional Option 4: Include Delaware Bay in southern region								
Total Option	4		5	3					12
4A Option				1					1
4B Option			5	1					6
	Regional Option 5: Delaware Bay is a specific region								
Total Option	4			1	8				13
5A Option				1	8				9
5B Option									0
	Timeframe for Measure Implementation								
Option 1: 2015 only	2			1					3
Option 2: 2015 with option to extend to 2016	3	2	4		2	2			13

Written Comment Summary on Draft Addendum XXVI to the Interstate FMP for Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass

In total 63 written comments were received, with three comments provided on behalf of groups or organizations. Two additional written comments were received after the public comment submission deadline and are not included in the summary numbers below.

Individual Comments

Sixty individual comments were received. Of the 42 comments that indicated preference for specific management options, almost all (40) were in favor of continuing adaptive regional management (Option 2). Among the individual commenters in favor of continuing adaptive regional management, nearly all (39) were in favor of splitting the State of New Jersey, either through Option 3 - creating a separate set of management measures for North and South Jersey (25), Option 4 - including the Delaware Bay with the southern region (5), or Option 5 - assigning Delaware Bay as its own region (9). Reasons cited in support of splitting New Jersey included concern over the loss of fishing business to the southern region, the availability of fish smaller than the 2014 minimum size limit of the Northern Region (CT-NJ; 18 inches) in the bay areas of southern New Jersey, and a need to reduce the discarding of undersized fish. Additionally, there was concern expressed over fishing on the same water body (Delaware Bay) with different management measures, creating inequity between anglers. Many Delaware Bay fishermen were primarily interested in making southern New Jersey regulations more similar to those of Delaware, or creating one set of regulations for the Delaware Bay waterbody. In specifying between either Regional Option 3 (splitting New Jersey) or Regional Option 4 (including Delaware Bay in Southern Region), most did not indicate a preference between inclusion or exclusion of Rhode Island in Northern Region (A or B Options). Of those who did, three commenters indicated a preference for the keeping Rhode Island as its own region.

Timeline for Implementation

Of the written comments received only two individuals indicated that they preferred Option 2, the ability to utilize the management for 2015 with the option to extend management into 2016.

Conservation Equivalency

Two commenters indicated their preference for returning to state-by-state conservation equivalency. Reasons cited included concern over the lack of rules for how an overage of the coastwide recreational harvest limit (RHL) would be dealt by each region in subsequent years under adaptive regional management.

Other Comments

Public comments (18) were received that did not specify a preferred option outlined in Draft Addendum XXVI. A majority of these comments (12) related to specifying a season length and minimum size limit.

Group/Organization Comments

Three groups/organizations offered written comment indicating a preference for adaptive regional management options. One group indicated that while they would support a return to state-by-state conservation equivalency, they also supported specific regional management options (Regional Option 5A

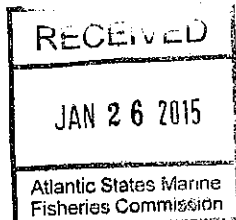
- creating a Delaware Bay specific region). While all three differed in the specific regional option chosen, all were in support of reducing the difference between regulations in shared waters between the states of New Jersey and Delaware through Regional Options 3, 4, or 5. Reasons cited included the negative economic impact of offering two different management measures between the states bordering Delaware Bay, a need to make regulations more equitable, and concern over the requirement of New Jersey anglers to purchase a Delaware fishing license when fishing on the Delaware side of Delaware Bay. One group preferred Timeframe Option 2, the ability to utilize management for 2015 with the option to extend management into 2016. Written comments were received from the following organizations:

- Fortescue Anglers Club
- Jersey Coast Anglers Association (JCAA)
- New Jersey Council of Diving Clubs (NJFSC)

Total Public Comments on ASMFC Draft Addendum XXVI to the Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass FMP: Summer Flounder Recreational Management in 2015

	Public Hearings		Written Individual		Written Group		Total	Total
	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose
Option 1: Status Quo, Conservation Equivalency								
	1		2		1		4	0
Option 2: Adaptive Regional Management								
	53	11	44	5	3	1	100	17
Regional Option 1: Regional approach of 2014								
	17		3		1		21	0
Regional Option 2: regions are MA, RI-NJ, DE-VA, and NC								
	11	7	2				13	7
Regional Option 3: Split New Jersey								
Total Option		4	25	4		1	25	9
3A Option			2				2	0
3B Option			1				1	0
Regional Option 4: Include Delaware Bay in southern region								
Total Option	12		5		1		18	0
4A Option	1		2		1		4	0
4B Option	6						6	0
Regional Option 5: Delaware Bay is a specific region								
Total Option	13		9	1	1		23	1
5A Option	9		8		1		18	0
5B Option							0	0
Timeframe for Measure Implementation								
Option 1: 2015 only	3						3	0
Option 2: 2015 with option to extend to 2016	13		2		1		16	0

Comments Received from Groups (3)



Jersey Coast Anglers Association

Working for Marine Recreational Anglers

1201 Route 37 East Suite 9 Toms River NJ 08753

TEL.: 732-506-6565 - FAX: 732-506-6975



January 19th, 2015

Mr. Kirby Rootes-Murdy
FMP Coordinator
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1050 North Highland St.
Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

Kirby,

For many years fluke were managed by state-by-state measures with conservation equivalency. Each state was given its own quota while being allowed to set their own regulations. In 2013 we still had state-by-state quotas but additionally, the ASMFC allowed the projected coastwide underage of fluke to be utilized. Ultimately New Jersey and New York shared this quota. It worked out well in that New Jersey was able to add additional days to its season while New York was able to reduce its size limit.

However, in 2014 regionalization was forced upon us against the will of the vast majority of our fishermen, fishing groups and those who represented NJ on the commission. New Jersey's anglers wanted to stay with state-by-state measures or be made its own region. However, despite that the ASMFC, via a conference call, made exceptions for Massachusetts and Rhode Island allowing them to be their own regions even though that option was not in the addendum. Why were they allowed to do that when NJ was not?

New Jersey was forced into a region with Connecticut and New York. In part this was done because the fluke biomass has shifted further northward. However, even with New York's size limit being reduced to 18" from 19" while New Jersey's was increased from 17 1/2" to 18", New Jersey still caught far more fluke than New York. New Jersey has the most fluke, the most fluke fishermen and the highest percentage of fluke trips to overall

fishing trips and yet regulations were adjusted so that New Jersey's projected harvest was lower than some of its past quotas. It certainly seems that NJ should be allowed to be its own region.

Another reason NJ was forced into regionalization was due to a disparity in the regulations in the Raritan Bay area where the commission deemed it was unfair for NJ anglers to have a 2" lower size limit than anglers from NY who were fishing in essentially the same waters. However, instead of correcting the problem all the commission did was to transfer the problem to Delaware Bay. In 2014 NJ anglers had to abide by an 18" size limit while DE anglers fishing the bay were allowed to keep fluke that were just 16". This was unfair to the anglers of southern NJ and many of our fishing businesses there lost revenue as people opted to fish out of DE instead.

While you can say that with regionalization in 2014, we had a projected harvest for each state as opposed to quotas or target quotas, it certainly appears to be a reallocation of quota. It seems that a portion of New Jersey's quota was reallocated to New York. Additionally though, fish from other states were also reallocated to our region. The projected harvest was substantially increased for Connecticut and New York while at the same time New Jersey's projected harvest was decreased.

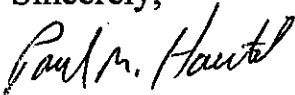
Then low and behold the MRIP numbers came out and showed that New Jersey over fished its projected harvest but since Connecticut and New York under fished theirs, our region is Ok. The data also showed that the coastwide quota was slightly exceeded but that may be neutralized by a slight coastwide quota increase for 2015. Now, it appears that NJ is being forced to stay in the regionalization plan or face significant cuts under state-by-state measures. Still, it initially seemed that even with regionalization, NJ would come out of this OK as our region underfished its projected harvest. One would think that therefore, we would at least have very similar regulations to what we had in 2014. However, there are several options that would change the structure of the regions and rumor has it that New York is pushing for a 18.5" size limit so that our region's season could be extended to 153 days, 25 days more than last year. An increase of the size limit to more than 18" will not be tolerated by the vast majority of anglers in NJ. In fact the majority of anglers in NJ may prefer returning to a 17 ½" size limit.

JCAA is on record as favoring state-by state measures with conservation equivalency. However, for 2015 we will only favor that option if it can be done without forcing us to have significantly stricter regulations. More specifically, we do not want a higher size limit, smaller bag limit or shorter season than we had in 2014.

Therefore of the various regionalization plans, **we favor Option 5A**. It is the fairest option not only to NJ but to other states as well. This option would have Delaware Bay as its own region and it could act as a transitional area between regions to the north and south of it. Perhaps Delaware Bay could have a 17" size limit while the region to its south could have a 16" size limit and the region to the north of it could have an 18" size limit. A 1" difference between any regions is far more acceptable than a 2" difference. **Having a neighboring region with any more than a 1" less restrictive size limit is totally unacceptable.** Further having Delaware Bay as its own region should have minimal impact on the other regions. For example, if the option to split NJ in half were chosen, there would likely again be a 2" gap between the regions. This would pit northern NJ anglers against those in southern NJ. Northern NJ as well as other states within that region would then likely have to sacrifice fish to accommodate southern NJ.

In closing we would like to urge the ASMFC to thoroughly review the pros and cons of each option and be as fair as possible to all the states. Lastly, we would like to thank you for allowing us to comment on this matter.

Sincerely,



Paul Haertel
President, JCAA
Cell (973) 943-8201
Home (973) 472-5630
E-mail – anglerpmh@aol.com

The Fortescue Anglers Club

Fortescue, NJ 08321

From: Linda Waterman [<mailto:namretaw@comcast.net>]

Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 9:53 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum XXVI

To the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission,

Please find attached our comments regarding the upcoming decision and subsequent vote pertaining to new flounder regulations.

Thank you for your attention to our point of view.

Respectfully Submitted,

George Moore

President

Fortescue Angler's Club

The Fortescue Anglers Club

Fortescue, NJ 08321

The Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Council changed the New Jersey flounder regulations last year. At that time they voted to regionalize the Atlantic States with the idea that this would promote better equality and conservation between states. New Jersey was grouped with New York and Connecticut despite printed regulations that allowed fishing in New York with one set of limits and those fishing in NJ with another and they could be fishing within sight of each other while fishing on the same stock of fish. In the same decision, the State of Delaware was placed with the southern regional states and currently advertises the ability to catch a 16 inch flounder with a yearly open season. New Jersey still has an 18 inch flounder size limit and approximately a 19 week season.

The Fortescue Angler's Club does not believe these councils realized the economic impact these choices have caused the New Jersey Charter boats and South Jersey marine, bait and tackle, and other affiliated businesses along the Delaware Bay. This club is the home to many Charter Boat Captains as well as recreational fishermen negatively impacted by this arrangement. It is no longer possible for NJ Charter Boat Captains to compete with Delaware and there has been a measureable loss in flounder charters as well as economic loss by the stick and mortar support businesses on the South Jersey side of the Delaware Bay. There is nothing more frustrating than being anchored next to a Delaware registered boat that is legally taking 16 in. flounder and New Jersey registered boats have to throw them back. Nor is there any equality when in the same waters, Delaware Bay Fishermen are keeping flounder long after the New Jersey fishermen's flounder season has closed. The added insult to this injury is the necessity of NJ fisherman to have to purchase a Delaware State fishing license before they even attempt to fish on the Delaware State side of the Delaware Bay ranging in cost from \$50.00 to \$600.00 a boat but still does not exempt us from having to follow NJ regional flounder laws.

This waterway is named the Delaware Bay and is shared by three states. It would appear the council may not have clearly understood all of the nuances of the South Jersey area and how commercially affected it is by the inequalities currently in place. New Jersey fishermen already pay for the privilege to fish on this bay. **We believe a fairer solution to this inadvertent**

The Fortescue Anglers Club

Fortescue, NJ 08321

mistake on the part of the councils would be to approve the 4a option discussed at the January 12 meeting in Toms River. This option would re-establish Delaware Bay fishing equality with reasonable enforcement capabilities.

It is imperative that the New Jersey Delaware Bay fishermen and businesses regain some of their lost revenue caused by the imbalanced situation created by the members of both councils at last year's meeting. It is our expectation that this extremely urgent concern will be rectified.

Respectfully,

George Moore, President
The Fortescue Angler's Club



NEW JERSEY COUNCIL OF DIVING CLUBS

P. O. Box 841
Eatontown, NJ 07724-0841
<http://www.scubanj.org>



Comments on Draft Addendum XXVI to the
Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass
Fishery Management Plan
Summer Flounder Recreational Management in 2015

Kirby Rootes-Murdy
FMP Coordinator

1/7/15

Atlantic States Marine Fishery Commission
1050 North Highland Street, Suite 200A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Mr. Kirby Rootes-Murdy:

The New Jersey Council of Diving Clubs (NJCDC) is an organization of 14 sport diving clubs in New Jersey with a few clubs in nearby states. Fluke and Black Sea Bass are important fish in the Sport Diver Fishery. The NJCDC submits the following comments on Draft Addendum XXVI – Summer Flounder Recreational Management in 2015.

You are reminded that sport divers take Fluke by spear in both state and federal waters as almost all eastern seaboard states provide for this. Although we are a small fishery and take only a tiny fraction of the total recreational catch, we do have the advantage of observing fluke in their natural environment and can often observe problems and monitor fluke populations in the ocean. In New Jersey, most sport divers take fluke in the inlets and ocean due to where most sport diving is done and underwater visibility factors.

Over the past few years, we have observed a decrease in the number of boats fishing for fluke along the coast, which may have something to do with the cost of fuel, which has only just recently come down. Estimates of an increase of angler participation by 35% since 1998 (p 3) does not jive with what we have observed. We do believe that a larger minimum size limit has helped restore stocks. The substantial expansion in size and age composition noted on page 4 is consistent with what I have seen.

The NJ Council of Diving Clubs would support State-by-state conservation equivalency which gives each state the maximum flexibility to develop its own. However, I'm not sure how a slight overage in a target quota would impact this, and it really should not since recreational targets are arbitrary. We would also support Adaptive Regional Management based on 2014 year such as Table 4, Regional Option 1. We do not support Regional Option 3 – Split New Jersey. The Marine Fisheries rules are complicated enough without getting involved in splitting New Jersey in two with different size and bag limits based on where you are on the NJ coast. Can you imagine the confusion that would cause in a recreational fishery where the public is not professionally involved. The NJ Council of Diving Clubs could live with an 18.5 inch minimum which could increase the length of the season, as in Option 4 and 5. This, however, may not be best for hook and line fisherman that primarily fish the bays.

Regarding Option 3.1.1, we support Option 2 (One year with the option to extend one year).

Sincerely

Jack Fullmer
Legislative Committee

Please reply directly to:

Jack Fullmer
443 Chesterfield-Arneytown Rd
Allentown, NJ 08501 jf2983182@msn.com

Comments Received
from Individuals (60)

From: ageejd@aol.com [<mailto:ageejd@aol.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 7:07 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Comments to Draft Addendum XXVI to Summer Flounder

I am a recreational fisherman from the state of Virginia, my choice of the options that is presented in this addendum, is Option 1 Coastwide or Conservation Equivalency.

An additional comment that I have is that it was disappointing that the previous Addendum in 2014 that selected the regional management did not establish rules on how overages would be addressed. Now we have overage's rules will have to be made after the fact. Rules need to be established in the beginning.

James David Agee
702 Lake Dale Way
Yorktown, Va 23693

-----Original Message-----

From: Michael Albright [<mailto:emilio528@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Friday, January 23, 2015 2:44 AM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum

My name is Michael Albright, I would like to endorse Option 3a of the DRAFT ADDENDUM XXVI TO THE SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP, BLACK SEA BASS FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN.

Thank you,

Michael Albright

From: michael allen [<mailto:michaelwayne7@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Saturday, January 17, 2015 6:41 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum XXVI

It is, in my opinion, the most advantageous to all recreational fishermen to maintain an eighteen inch limit statewide for New Jersey.

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

From: Noel Angelucci [<mailto:sircetus59@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 9:08 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: (Subject: Draft Addendum XXVI)

Noel Angelucci
7 Arcturus Dr.
Sewell ,N.J. ,08080
Phone 856 373 1917
sircetus59@yahoo.com

Hello i am Noel Angelucci a recreational fisherman and a member of Fortescue Anglers from New Jersey that fishes the Delaware Bay commenting on the Draft Addendum XXVI for summer Flounder . As for options 1 and options 2 ether work but had to pick option 2

as for option 3a no

for option 3b no

for option 4a yes would be the easiest way to equal out the waters between NJ and Delaware

for option 4b yes would be same as above to equal the waters between Delaware Bay

for option 5a yes if was only way to make NJ and Delaware close a inch is not so bad

for option 5b yes if it was only way to the split between NJ and Delaware fare

As a Delaware Bay fisherman and member of Fortescue Anglers last few years since hurricane Sandy have been tough on our bay option 4a and 4b would defiantly help are area local economy !

As for option 3.1.1 Timeframe for Summer Flounder Measures

option 2 a 2 year would make best sense instead of doing this after year after year

yours truly
Noel Angelucci

From: jaxcycles@aol.com [<mailto:jaxcycles@aol.com>]

Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 4:16 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: summer flounder

i agree with the jersey coast anglers association position

thank you

john f (jack) aurnhammer

toms river nj

From: F. R. Bossert [<mailto:frbsrt@hotmail.com>]

Sent: Saturday, January 17, 2015 3:05 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum XXVI

Dear Kirby Rootes-Murdy,

I recently read a newspaper article by John Oswald in the Asbury Park Press, outlining the recent hearing concerning the summer flounder management plan for 2015.

As a long time sport fisherman and boat owner, I was appalled at some of the suggestions concerning size restrictions. I frequently fish the Navesink and Shrewsbury Rivers, Sandy Hook Bay and inshore waters off Sandy Hook, NJ. This past season (2014) I made 7 or 8 trips with 2 to 3 friends on board and averaged catching 35 to 40 flounder each trip.....with ZERO KEEPERS!!! This amounted to over 200 fish with over 200 throwbacks. While this may seem strange, discussions with many other boat owners reflect the same problem.

There seems to be an abundance of flounder available, but; very, very few in the 18 inch range. Raising the size to 18 1/2 inches would be unconscionable! I have read far too many articles which indicate that the summer flounder stock is now healthier than ever and I see no reason to restrict the size limits even further.

It's not hard to gauge the sentiment of so many charter captains and ordinary sportsmen and women just "giving-up", selling their boats and abandoning the sport. I hope some "common sense" surfaces before a decision is reached. I had hoped the size restriction would be reduced to at least 17 1/2 inches, not increased to 18 1/2 inches!

I hope you will consider my feelings and those of all my fellow fishermen/women when arriving at a decision.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank R. Bossert
One Grand Tour
Locust, NJ 07760-2343

frbsrt@hotmail.com

From: WBOTHE032@aol.com [mailto:WBOTHE032@aol.com]

Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 8:07 AM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: NJ Fluke regs

South Jersey Fluke Fishing is completely different then North Jersey.

We have much smaller fish.

State wide regs result in nothing for the table and many many throw backs

how many throw backs Die ?

the state should be split

From: Frank Breakell [<mailto:captfb68@gmail.com>]

Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 11:01 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Flounder regs for NJ

I am writing to express my concern for the state of our fisheries. As a fishing guide and avid angler I would like to weigh in on the upcoming vote concerning fluke regulations. I live in Southern NJ and fish the Delaware Bay and Cape May Rips area often, as well as the ICW. The 18" limit last year made it difficult at times to catch a keeper. It seems our waters are warming more so than in years past. This seems to be moving smaller Southern fish into our waters, while larger fluke move further North. Just an observation I've noticed in looking at my fishing logs over the last twelve years. No, I do not believe in global warming, but I do believe in climactic change as we are still moving out of the last ice age. Another issue is that Delaware has a 16" size limit which makes it difficult for a NJ boat to fish Delaware waters and return with legally caught flounder if less than the NJ size limit. Another issue is the fact that sizable flounder move into our back bays starting in April. This is one of the best times of the year for targeting trophy flounder and awesome table fare. Instead the regulations cater to the tourist trade. Why not have an early season, close it for awhile mid summer and then open it back up for October and November when the big flounder are stacked out on the lumps. Or even better, drop the catch limit to three fish at 17" and give us a longer season. That solves everything. Just my \$.02. Sorry for rambling.

From: Bruno, Anthony (IS) (Contr) [<mailto:Anthony.J.Bruno@ngc.com>]
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2015 12:58 PM
To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Subject: New Jersey Summer Flounder 2015 Regulations

Dear Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission,

I am writing to give my opinion and thoughts on splitting New Jersey into 2 management regions for summer flounder regulations. I have been fishing both the southern and northern sections of NJ for the last 30+ years. The North and South Regions are very different. As many people know when flounder migrate in from the shelf in the spring they tend to drift north with every season get pushed north. This is one of the reasons why the northern half of NJ tends to get larger flounder. I am in support of splitting state in 2.

Thanks, Anthony

Anthony Bruno
7575 Colshire Dr. 4th Floor
McLean, VA 22102
(703)556-3626
Anthony.J.Bruno@ngc.com



From: Steve Carnahan [<mailto:topsidess1@verizon.net>]

Sent: Friday, January 16, 2015 4:37 PM

To: FORTESCUEDREAM@aol.com; draudenbu@cs.com; dsharpless55@aol.com; mike@bonanza2.com; jraively2@gmail.com; dkull1@comcast.net; captainblithe@yahoo.com; Steven Krumm; Dewman801@comcast.net; mjkatsoris@aol.com; fish4tesq@comcast.net; namretaw@comcast.net; felmeytc@yahoo.com; jogatar@verizon.net; jmaffei@engineeringdesign.com; jameslutz7@comcast.net; Jackintr42@comcast.net; sundog@yahoo.com; bluefinn4s@aol.com; rgc4downe@comcast.net; topsidess1@verizon.net; cawmanjr@comcast.net; ginnymac1575@comcast.net; katerdid2003@yahoo.com; kenmchugh@contactems.com; auxbob@inbox.com; mako228cc@gmail.com; ValentineM7@aol.com; MissFortescue@comcast.net; motherduckers@yahoo.com; pbokma173@comcast.net; Russell Lee Allen; Ziggy2006@comcast.net

Cc: jhutchinson@joinrfa.org; nico@comcast.net; senvandrew@njleg.org; sensweeney@njleg.org; Kirby Rootes-Murdy; douglasra@co.cumberland.nj.us

Subject: Re: Check out Management: Time running out for fluke comments

Donny,

I sure wish you were ! However, this is my understanding also and I agree with your suggestions !

All the best,

Steve

On 01/16/15, FORTESCUEDREAM@aol.com wrote:

[Management: Time running out for fluke comments](#)

Option 5A gives Delaware State a huge advertising and a very unfair fishing advantage over the NJ Delaware bay Charter boats with a 1 inch difference and a full season we need the same size fish and season for the same fish stock and body of water to stay competitive with the State of Delaware. Otherwise I believe our N. J. businesses' will disappear to the Delaware Charter boats completely this year. The ASMFE was in favor of making New York and New Jersey the same season and size limits last year for conservation and equality I guess they don't realize they still have us in the same situation as New York was. We will still have to pay for a License to fish Delaware State waters \$300.00-\$600.00-\$50.00 and throw back the 16 inch fish that we are already paying for and Delaware can keep them. Some of us Don't have an option if we fish 1 mile south of the Salem power plant north to Delaware Mem bridge we must buy a Delaware fishing license Delaware State line touches our shore line. The ONLY fair solution to this problem is Delaware Bay one set of regulations for both States.

Option 5A and 5B are not fair to the NJ fishing boats Delaware State still keeping 16 inch fish and New Jersey 17 inch

Option 3A and 3B keep Delaware State and New Jersey the same at 17 inch and open season, equal and fair solution

Option 4A and 4B keep Delaware State and New Jersey the same at 16 inch and open season, equal and fair solution

someone please notify me if I am reading these options wrong.

Don Stein
Fortescue Captains Association

From: Mike Clark [<mailto:scubame58@aol.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 8:43 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum XXVI

Dear Sir,

I am responding to the latest information available regarding the 2015 flounder season for NJ. I am an RN by licensure. As are most of us in this profession, I am an information junkie. For several years I have kept a fishing log with ever evolving stats. The stats show a steady increase in fish per trip, but a steady decline in keeper fish per trip. Last year my son in law and I had our best/worst year ever. We were fortunate to get in 23 trips with 500 flounder caught but only 30 keepers. That is over 21 fish per trip with an average of 1.3 keepers per trip. That is about 5 filets per trip. This is not enough for a meal in each house.

If you think about the other side of the equation, the amount of fish caught, then it is obvious that at least in our boat the flounder underneath our boat is increasing or we are becoming better fisherman. If this is true then why do we need to reduce the numbers of fish kept. It is obvious in my limited sample that there is no danger that fish have been overfished.

We go to a couple of commission meetings a year. The number thrown out there for keeper flounder caught per day by recreational fisherman is 6,000 per day. Again as an information junkie I find this impossible. After 9 or 10 in the morning when we fish we do an unofficial census. We accomplish by asking practically all the boats we pass, how they are doing. The answers all almost always 1 or 0 or most of the time it is a thumbs down sign. We fish the Whale Beach, Strathmere, and Sea Isle areas and about half way through the season we move out front on the big boats because all we catch later in the season, in the back bays are non keepers. It is not much better out front! Where are these 6,000 fish being caught?

The limit at 18" is too high. If we go to 18.5, we may as well make it catch and release.

Yes we go out to have a good time and commune with nature. I have had some of the best times in my 57 years on the water fishing. But I don't believe it to be an unreasonable expectation to at least take home a meal per fisherman and on a good day, put one in the freezer!

Earlier I addressed reductions. It has been stated that some of our quota was given to NY, but we received portions of other states quotas making it basically a wash. It was also stated that NJ only slightly overfished our quota. If this is true then why are some of the options so drastic. As I stated earlier, if the limit goes to 18.5 our numbers will further shrink to less than one keeper per trip!

I believe an option of splitting the state and joining Southern NJ to the Delaware Bay. Start our season earlier and decrease the daily keeper allowance to 4 fish per day would be an acceptable option for most anglers.

I love flounder fishing and would never do something that I thought would endanger its future. I already have 3 grandbabies and 4 great grands. I want a flounder fishing future for them also!

Thanks you for your time.

If you wish I am available to speak to anyone in your office that is gathering information in this endeavor.

Thank you,

Frank "Mike" Clark RN

Amy Hirrlinger

From: Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Sent: Friday, January 09, 2015 11:50 AM
To: Amy Hirrlinger
Subject: FW: Draft Addendum XXVI

From: Ed Clauss [mailto:eclauss@comcast.net]
Sent: Friday, January 09, 2015 11:10 AM
To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Subject: Draft Addendum XXVI

Dear Sir: I would like to voice my opinion on this matter. I live in NJ and the only body of water I ever fish is the Delaware Bay. I think it is ridiculous that I have to pay a fee to the State of Delaware so I can fish in their part of the Delaware Bay but any Flounder I catch must comply with NJ Reg of 18" and Delaware's Reg is 16" with no closed season. Whereas I have a defined season. I would like to see one set of Regs for the Delaware Bay, so I don't have to catch 18" flounder while I fish alongside Delaware boats that keep 16" fish. With that being said I would like to see Option 4A instituted for the Delaware Bay. Thank You in advance for any and all help in this matter.

Ed Clauss
192 Westover Drive
Delran, NJ 08075-2226

From: Sally Cohill [<mailto:scohill333@gmail.com>]

Sent: Friday, January 23, 2015 12:40 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum XXVI

Dear Members,

I am writing in support of option 4A , including the Delaware Bay as a unit that includes both New Jersey and Delaware providing equality in the application of fishing regulations. The proposed regulations would rectify a multitude of issues that currently exist between the two states that share a common inland body of water, the Delaware Bay, yet have a 2" difference in size in legal flounder.

As you know, Delaware Fisheries have had a longer season and smaller size limit than New Jersey with the 2014 legislation. Yet, the Delaware State line touches New Jersey in the upper northern region of the Delaware Bay.

Conservation and managed fisheries are essential to sustainable flounder resources. I believe Draft Addendum XXVI will solve many of the concerns expressed by the recreational fishing industries with the adoption of option 4A, 4B, 5A or 5B. My preference would be 4A as this aligns both NJ and Del in a common body of water, the Delaware Bay.

Thank you for the opportunity to be heard regarding this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Sally A. Cohill

73 Dealtown Road

Pittsgrove, NJ 08318

856-358-0255

From: robert cope jr [<mailto:captbobjr@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Saturday, January 17, 2015 6:48 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: NJ 2015 FLUKE REGS

I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE SPLIT STATE OPTION. THE DELAWARE BAY IS NOW A JOKE WE ARE 18" AND DELAWARE IS 16" THIS IS THE KISS OF DEATH FOR THR FOR HIRE SECTOR FISHING THIS AREA WE ALL DRAW FROM THE PHILLY AREA AND FOR WHAT REASON WOULD A CUSTOMER COME TO NEW JERSEY AND KEEP ONE OR NONE WHEN THEY CAN DRIVE THE SAME DISTANCE TO THE DELAWARE BEACHES GET ON A BOAT AND GET THEIR 4 16" FISH ON MANY TRIPS I THINK THAT 4 FISH AT 17" OPEN ALL YEAR WOULD REVIVE MANY WHO WILL BE OUT OF BUSINESS AFTER THIS YEAR. IT IS THE SAME FISH THE OCEAN OUT OF EXTREME SOUTH JERSEY I BELIEVE IT WAS OPTION 3B

THANK YOU CAPT. BOB COPE FULL AHEAD SPORT FISHING CAPE MAY NJ

From: info@fishermansheadquarters.com [<mailto:info@fishermansheadquarters.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 11:08 AM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Cc: FHQ : Greg

Subject: Comments on Fluke Addendum XXVI - 2015

Dear Mr. Kirby Rootes-Murdy,

As an individual and also as an owner of a Bait & Tackle retail store located in the State of New Jersey I agree with the following Jersey Coast Anglers Association (JCAA) Fluke (Summer Flounder) Addendum XXVI comments as per their following letter...

JCAA Comments on Fluke Addendum XXVI - 2015

January 19th, 2015

*Mr. Kirby Rootes-Murdy - FMP Coordinator
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1050 North Highland St.
Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22201*

Dear Mr. Kirby Rootes-Murdy:

For many years fluke were managed by state-by-state measures with conservation equivalency. Each state was given its own quota while being allowed to set their own regulations. In 2013 we still had state-by-state quotas but additionally, the ASMFC allowed the projected coastwide underage of fluke to be utilized. Ultimately New Jersey and New York shared this quota. It worked out well in that New Jersey was able to add additional days to its season while New York was able to reduce its size limit.

However, in 2014 regionalization was forced upon us against the will of the vast majority of our fishermen, fishing groups and those who represented NJ on the commission. New Jersey's anglers wanted to stay with state-by-state measures or be made its own region. However, despite that the ASMFC, via a conference call, made exceptions for Massachusetts and Rhode Island allowing them to be their own regions even though that option was not in the addendum. Why were they allowed to do that when NJ was not?

New Jersey was forced into a region with Connecticut and New York. In part this was done because the fluke biomass has shifted further northward. However, even with New York's size limit being reduced to 18" from 19" while New Jersey's was increased from 17 1/2" to 18", New Jersey still caught far more fluke than New York. New Jersey has the most fluke, the most fluke fishermen and the highest percentage of fluke trips to overall fishing trips and yet regulations were adjusted so that New Jersey's projected harvest was lower than some of its past quotas. It certainly seems that NJ should be allowed to be its own region.

Another reason NJ was forced into regionalization was due to a disparity in the regulations in the Raritan Bay area where the commission deemed it was unfair for NJ anglers to have a 2" lower size limit than anglers from NY who were fishing in essentially the same waters. However, instead of correcting the problem all the commission did was to transfer the problem to Delaware Bay. In 2014 NJ anglers had to abide by an 18" size limit while DE anglers fishing the bay were allowed to keep fluke that were just 16". This was unfair to the anglers of southern NJ and many of our fishing businesses there lost revenue as people opted to fish out of DE instead.

While you can say that with regionalization in 2014, we had a projected harvest for each state as opposed to quotas or target quotas, it certainly appears to be a reallocation of quota. It seems that a portion of New Jersey's quota was reallocated to New York. Additionally though, fish from other states were also reallocated to our region. The projected harvest was substantially increased for Connecticut and New York while at the same time New Jersey's projected harvest was decreased.

Then low and behold the MRIP numbers came out and showed that New Jersey over fished its projected harvest but since Connecticut and New York under fished theirs, our region is Ok. The data also showed that the coastwide quota was slightly exceeded but that may be neutralized by a slight coastwide quota increase for 2015. Now, it appears that NJ is being forced to stay in the regionalization plan or face significant cuts under state-by-state measures. Still, it initially seemed that even with regionalization, NJ would come out of this OK as our region underfished its projected harvest. One would think that therefore, we would at least have very similar regulations to what we had in 2014. However, there are several options that would change the structure of the regions and rumor has it that New York is pushing for a 18.5" size limit so that our region's season could be extended to 153 days, 25

days more than last year. An increase of the size limit to more than 18" will not be tolerated by the vast majority of anglers in NJ. In fact the majority of anglers in NJ may prefer returning to a 17 ½" size limit.

JCAA is on record as favoring state-by state measures with conservation equivalency. However, for 2015 we will only favor that option if it can be done without forcing us to have significantly stricter regulations. More specifically, we do not want a higher size limit, smaller bag limit or shorter season than we had in 2014.

Therefore of the various regionalization plans, we favor Option 5A. It is the fairest option not only to NJ but to other states as well. This option would have Delaware Bay as its own region and it could act as a transitional area between regions to the north and south of it. Perhaps Delaware Bay could have a 17" size limit while the region to its south could have a 16" size limit and the region to the north of it could have an 18" size limit. A 1" difference between any regions is far more acceptable than a 2" difference. Having a neighboring region with any more than a 1" less restrictive size limit is totally unacceptable. Further having Delaware Bay as its own region should have minimal impact on the other regions. For example, if the option to split NJ in half were chosen, there would likely again be a 2" gap between the regions. This would pit northern NJ anglers against those in southern NJ. Northern NJ as well as other states within that region would then likely have to sacrifice fish to accommodate southern NJ.

In closing we would like to urge the ASMFC to thoroughly review the pros and cons of each option and be as fair as possible to all the states. Lastly, we would like to thank you for allowing us to comment on this matter.

Sincerely,

Paul Haertel - President, JCAA

Cell (973) 943-8201 Home (973) 472-5630 E-mail – anglerpmh@aol.com

Acceptance of the above JCAA sensible comments that I agree with would provide badly needed support for our retail store and for our fifteen employees. Please add my comments to your list of Fluke (Summer Flounder) Addendum XXVI replies. Thank you.

Regards,

Stanley J. Cudnik – President

Fisherman's Headquarters

280 W 9th St.

Ship Bottom, NJ 08008-4613

Phn: 609.494.5739 Fax: 609.494.9271

URL: www.FishermansHeadquarters.com

Email: info@FishermansHeadquarters.com

From: rick daprino [<mailto:rickdap@optimum.net>]

Sent: Friday, January 16, 2015 6:39 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: summer flounder

being there will not be RSA permits this year I would suggest an opening date for summer flounder be moved back to may,1st.

From: Marco Disario [<mailto:mdis252000@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 9:32 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: split

split NJ don't group us in with ny early season 17 in size limit

From: John Distefano [<mailto:johneagle32@gmail.com>]
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2015 1:44 PM
To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Subject: Re: Fluke Regulations for a split NJ

Subject Line: Draft Addendum

On Friday, January 23, 2015, John Distefano <johneagle32@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi, I am a Recreational fisherman and my port is Great Bay. On the proposed Fluke Regulations for NJ's 2015 season to split the state of NJ at Great bay, I respectfully disagree with the proposed options.

I consider myself as an seasoned Fluke fisherman as I fish at least twice a week during the fluke season. It has been extremely tough with the current size limits to put together a good catch of fluke in Great bay and the surrounding waters. Even as north as Barnegat Light.

The biomass of large fluke is in the Northern part of State as I have observed in my 30 years of experience fishing saltwater. I have direct knowledge of friends who fish out of Manasquan Inlet and Shark River inlet that tell me the fluke fishery is a lot better for keepers than out of Great Bay. As I considered moving my boat to a slip in Shark River because of friends recommendations because they do so well catching keeper fluke.

I respectfully propose the split of NJ to be at North Jetty of Manasquan Inlet to separate South Jersey from North Jersey for Fluke regulations.

John Distefano

From: Ron Gallagher [<mailto:RGallagher@mccaffreyassoc.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 9:49 AM
To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Subject: Draft Addendum

Kirby Rootes-Murdy,

I am in favor of either Table 4 (Regional Option 1), or Table 5 (Regional Option 2). Both keep the flounder size in NJ at a statewide size of 18" and a season of 128 days. It will be too confusing to split the state, (and unfair). I am not opposed to a reduced bag limit of 4, (per Regional Option 2), as 4 keepers is plenty for an individual angler.

I do feel that the fluke fishery has re-bounded in the last year, as it was my experience that there were countless small flounder available in the Ocean City, NJ area last year. I also feel that most of the scientific data presented is extremely difficult to measure, and very inaccurate at best. An increase in size would be very detrimental for the general public, tackle shops, and the charter fleet. Not to mention the thousands of businesses that benefit from the anglers who visit NJ during the summer flounder season.

Regards,

Ron Gallagher
3 Barbados Lane
Ocean City, NJ 08266

From: joe@haasesmarina.com [<mailto:joe@haasesmarina.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 8:57 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: draft ammendum

In regards to the fluke regulations for 2015, I would support splitting the size limits for different areas. I own a marina on the Maurice river, and business has been suffering over the past few years, mainly due to the fishing regulations. We have lost a lot of business to Delaware, due to their more favorable regulations. I have had former customers tell me they got a slip in Delaware, just because they can keep more fish overall. Not only do the flounder regulations need to be more in line with Delaware, our striped bass regulations need to be inline with Delaware also. We cannot compete with Delaware with the big difference in regulations the way they are now. Thanks for your time, Joe Haase, Haase's Marina, 865-785-7001.

From: Jason Gmail [<mailto:jrwendling@gmail.com>]

Sent: Sunday, January 18, 2015 10:50 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Southern nj summer flounder regs

Hello. I wanted to email an input on the summer flounder regs to support option 3. Either A or B is good but I strongly support splitting nj north and south. Thank you. -Jason

Sent from my iPhone

From: Edmund Kasprenski [<mailto:ebkaye@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Friday, January 16, 2015 12:06 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: draft addendum XXVI

Gentlemen;

I am 79 years old and only have a few years left to enjoy fluke fishing. The management of fluke fishing here in N.J. has gotten to the point where I am ready to throw the towel in. For example last year I caught over 100 fluke and was only legally able to keep three, because of the size restriction. Why not take pity on us old timers and set a limit so that we can enjoy our last years. Now you want to go to an 18-1/2 size which puts back again so that we may as well get out of fishing altogether.

For any one over 75 years old which can be proven by a drivers license why not go to 1 fish at 17", one fish at 17-1/2", one fish at 18", and the balance at 18-1/2". At least give us old timers a break. We would not have to go to the super market and buy fluke fillets at 14" caught by commercial fishermen or by frozen tilapia imported from fish farms in China or elsewhere. I wonder if you have read how they feed the fish at the foreign countries in cages under chickens so that the fish are fed the droppings from chickens. We in this country and this state are forced to live by the rules you people set and if we don't we are fined \$100,00 dollars per fish.

Take pity on us old timers and let the few years we have left be joyous ones.

Edmund Kasprenski Little Egg Harbor, N.J.

From: Matt [<mailto:mjkatsoris@aol.com>]
Sent: Sunday, January 18, 2015 12:23 PM
To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Subject: Delaware Bay alignment with the southern region

Dear Sirs

As an avid fisherman for 35 years in the Delaware Bay and member of the Fortescue captains and boat owners association, I am writing this letter to submit my comments to the ASMFC on the Flounder addendum. I would like to voice my support for the New Jersey section of the Delaware Bay to join the southern region and have the same catch limits and season as the state of Delaware option 4A and 4B. I feel these options would be fair, since both New Jersey and Delaware share the same body of water in the Delaware bay and the same stock of fish.

By utilizing one of these two options, it would benefit the economy along the New Jersey side of bay including the commercial fishing charter, recreational fishing and local businesses and make it fair for those of us that fish the Delaware bay.

Please accept my comments and thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion.

Sincerely,

Matthew J Katsoris Sr
234 Leonard Cake Rd
Franklinville, NJ 08322

State of New Jersey Fortescue State Marina Dock #29
Fortescue NJ

From: joe Kenney [<mailto:jkenney3@mac.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 1:27 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft

Dear Kirby,

Please do not advocate a spit in the state of New Jersey in upcoming fluke legislation.

Keep the limits.

Replenish the stock.

Thanks much,

Joe Kenney

From: Bob Kurtz [<mailto:kurtzrr@comcast.net>]

Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 9:04 AM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum XXVI

Flounders - I'm in favor of the proposal to split the State of New Jersey into North/South. Easy to enforce just like the Bluefin Tuna giant category.

From: the wizzz [<mailto:cappy615@verizon.net>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 7:07 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: fluke fishing

to comment on { Paul Haertel, president of the Jersey Coast Anglers Association }
written letter to your organization i would like to state i agree with paul and the jcaa
opinions % 100 .

dave lilly - new jersey fluke fisherman

p.s. i have no affiliation to the jcaa , any tackle shops , or charter boats . i just happen
to agree with all of pauls comments and hope they get serious considerations .

thanks ,

dave

From: Mark mark [<mailto:md4848@msn.com>]

Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 9:15 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: split

split nj, i don't want to be in with they ny or should we be. I want to fish longer and early in the back with 17 inch size, early may to end of September, or no close at all. I fish everyday and i don't see anything being done to study the fish in the back, just guess you know it

From: Brian McEvoy [<mailto:BMcEvoy@grahamcurtin.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 9:44 AM
To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Subject: Draft Addendum

Mr. Rootes Murdy,

I write to submit comments regarding the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Draft Addendum XXVI to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Summer Flounder, regarding recreational management in 2015. I am in strong favor of Regional Option 3-Split New Jersey. I do all of my fishing in the back bay and inshore regions of Cape May County, NJ. It has been my experience that the fishery there is very healthy as there is a rare day that an angler is not able to spend an enjoyable time on the water targeting summer flounder with numerous catches. However, the standard size of the fish caught tends to run in the 14"-17" range. The throwback to keeper ratio for the summer of 2014 was on the order of 25:1. While I have only anecdotal evidence of a generally larger fish stock in N. NJ and coastal NY, I believe we would all benefit from splitting the state to allow a lower size limit of 17". This would likely decrease fish mortality from the catch and release of undersized fish and allow the recreational angler to enjoy the experience of harvesting fish on a more consistent basis. I likely differ from many of the people who are submitting comments in that I think a possession limit of 4-5 fish is excessive. As you are probably well aware, too many fisherman believe in fishing until they "limit." By restricting the possession limit to 2 per day, we will leave more fish available and encourage folks to get out there more often.

So in short, for S. NJ I would ask that you strongly consider a smaller size limit coupled with a lower possession limit.

Thanks for your time.

Regards,

Brian McEvoy

Brian B. McEvoy | [Web Profile](#)
[Graham Curtin, A Professional Association](#) | BMcEvoy@GrahamCurtin.com |
4 Headquarters Plaza | P.O. Box 1991 | Morristown, NJ 07962-1991
T: 973.401.7139 F: 973.387.7639

From: Paul McEvoy [<mailto:paul.mcevoy@ericsson.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 3:52 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Proposed Fluke Regulation Changes

Mr. Rootes Murdy –

I am writing to you to submit comments regarding the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Draft Addendum XXVI to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Summer Flounder, regarding recreational management in 2015. I strongly favor Regional Option 3-Split New Jersey. I fish in the back bay and inshore regions of Cape May County, NJ. I have found that the fishing there is very healthy as there is a rare day that any fisherman is not able to have fun on the water targeting summer flounder with numerous catches.

The size of the fish I catch tends to run in the 14"-17" range. The throwback to keeper ratio for the summer of 2014 was on too large to calculate. I believe the fishermen in Southern New Jersey would all benefit from splitting the state to allow a lower size limit of 17". This would likely decrease fish mortality from the catch and release of undersized fish and allow the recreational angler to enjoy the experience of harvesting fish on a more consistent basis.

I would offer one more item for your consideration. The limit of 4 or 5 fish seems too high. Why not limit it to 2 per day. Most guys on a good day will fish until their "limit". If you make the limit 2 or 3, there will be more fish available to all of us.

So as a South Jersey fisherman, I would ask that you strongly consider a smaller size limit coupled with a lower possession limit.

Thanks for your time.

Regards,

Paul McEvoy
7 Sunnyside Court
Ocean City, NJ 08226

From: BILL [<mailto:hntnfsh00@hotmail.com>]

Sent: Saturday, January 17, 2015 7:36 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum XXVI

I would like to comment and say I am for Option 1, the same regional management format used in 2014. I am a NY angler (private vessel) and thought last years format was much more equitable then that of the previous few years. Thank you for your time in this matter.

William Morrison

From: Jim Munizza [<mailto:jim@revelationsperfume.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 3:53 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum XXV

I would just like to provide some feed back on this addendum.

I feel that Regional Option 3A or 3B is the best option for New Jersey anglers.

When you look at the summer flounder fishery in New Jersey, the northern and southern parts of the state fish for summer flounder at different times of the year. The southern half starts to fish for these fish earlier than the northern. This is due to a couple of different factors. Water temperature is 1 major factor and other fisheries, i.e striped bass, is another big factor. Also, it is my understanding that the average summer flounder in southern New Jersey waters is between 16-17 inches in length. I also believe that average size fish in northern New Jersey is 18-19 inches. If the size limit in New Jersey is 18 inches, it becomes very difficult to catch a keeper as you need to catch an above average fish just to be able to keep it.

I understand that conservation officers feel this option would make there job increasingly difficult to do. With the multitude of species and changing seasons for those species that they deal with, i.e tog season which opens and closes multiple times with changing bag limits, that they already deal with, I do not see this as a reason to decline this option.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my feedback on this issue.

Jim Munizza

From: Scott [<mailto:scottnewhall@hotmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 1:22 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum XXVI fluke

Good afternoon,

I would be elated to see one of the options that divided New Jersey into the northern and southern regions - mostly because I would like a 365 season. April and May fishing in the back bays would be back in earnest and it would help business and recreation in this area greatly. The surge of interest in this region would be tremendous and economic benefits immeasurable.

I've missed fishing in the early part of the season when fluke are readily available. I've often wanted to access Delaware's year-round fluke fishery, but crossing the Delaware Bay via ferry or driving around to take the bridge is extremely costly and time-consuming - whether to trailer my boat or charter. But for the recreational fishermen slightly to the north, they can travel, trailer or come down here when their season closes. It's still a Huge win for them too! No ferries or large bridges or Philadelphia traffic to navigate. They can shift their effort slightly south when the northern fishery closes. This would be a big win for the whole state.

I strongly encourage the options that give New Jersey a year-round fishery. And I hope to keep in tact a high bag limit and decent size limit too. Fluke fishing is strong. We need to curb the striped take and allow some more fluke take.

Thank you,

Capt. Scott Newhall

www.timeoutfishingcharters.com

From: Tony Novak [<mailto:onlineadviser@live.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 11:39 AM
To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Subject: comment on flounder management plan for the Delaware Bay

January 21, 2015

Mr. Kirby Rootes-Murdy
FMP Coordinator
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission
1050 North Highland St.
Suite 200 A-N
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Mr. Kirby Rootes-Murdy:

I am writing to express support for the comments already submitted to you by Paul Haertel, president of the Jersey Coast Anglers Association, on the proposed ASAMFC Summer Flounder Fisheries Management Plan.

I wish to specifically call attention to the suggestion of treating the Delaware Bay as a single management zone rather than being subject to two significantly different state standards. Despite the persistent rumors that a 17" flatfish can easily distinguish between the baits of a DE boat and a NJ boat fishing side by side on the bay, the current system simply makes no sense from a stock management perspective.

Thank you for your work in managing this important fishery.

Sincerely,



Tony Novak, MBA, MT
Certified Public Accountant
Mail: P.O. Box 333 Newport NJ 08345
Home: 141 Jones Street, Bala Cynwyd PA 19004
Telephone in NJ: (856) 282-1016 or in PA: (610) 572-1724
Email: onlineadviser@live.com
Web: www.tonymovak.com
LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/tonynovakcpa>
Twitter: [@tonynovak](https://twitter.com/tonynovak)

Authorized Representative, Money Island Marina, Newport NJ
President, BaySave Corp., Newport NJ
Board Member, Delaware river Greenway Partnership, Stockton NJ

From: boverstreet70 [<mailto:boverstreet70@gmail.com>]

Sent: Sunday, January 18, 2015 12:07 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum

I am writing you to say i and many other fisherman are in favor of splitting the state into regions. North Jersey goes with new York and south goes with Delaware. The larger fluke have been moving north and to put the entire state with new York is not the way to go. It's hard enough to catch a couple of keeper's with the size being 18 inches let alone at 18 1/2 or 19. Thank you for valuing my opinion.

Thanks Brian Overstreet

From: Mark Parker - 3BV [<mailto:M.Parker@RaymondJames.com>]
Sent: Friday, January 23, 2015 3:21 PM
To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Subject: fluke

It would be better to lower the size limits to 16- 17 inches, the higher mortality from releasing undersize fish, defeats the intent of the regulations

Mark Parker

Vice President, Investments
Raymond James & Associates
302 Fellowship Road, Suite 130 / Mount Laurel, NJ 08054
Ph: 856.439.6178 / TF: 855.577.4394 / F: 856.780.6193
m.parker@raymondjames.com
parkerwealthmgt.com

From: Stuart Patterson [<mailto:stuart@preston-patterson.com>]

Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 4:07 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Fluke Regulations

Importance: High

Kirby,

I do not see what the split size limits for the fluke fishing benefit, especially since I sail from Barnegat Light. I am much more in favor of a reduced bag limit of 4 fish with a minimum with a minimum size limit of 17 inches. The way it is now we are keeping and killing the breeder and increasing the mortality rate with all of the fish that are under the current limit that are being thrown back.

J. Stuart Patterson, CIC
Preston-Patterson Co., Inc.
Post Office Box 244
Conshohocken, PA 19428
(T) 610-834-0090, ext. 112
(F) 610-832-0241

From: Peters, Craig [<mailto:PetersC@gtps.k12.nj.us>]
Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 10:30 AM
To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Subject: Draft Addendum

Hi

My name is Capt. Craig Peters. I run the charter boat Fish Tale out of the Ocean City/ Somers Point NJ area. Myself and other charter Captains have known for years that the northern part of the state of New Jersey has had much bigger Flounder and the total numbers are greater. Here in the southern part of NJ we get many more smaller fish and keepers of 18" or bigger are not nearly as prevalent as north jersey.

It is time to split the state of NJ into two as it would pertain to the regulations on Flounder. I don't see how this could possibly be a logistical nightmare. If a person was to be stopped by an officer north of the established line the northern rules would be in effect. If checked on the south side of said line the southern rules apply.

At times it can be difficult for our charters to put 18" Flounder or bigger in the box. It is felt in the pocket with lack of tips and the worst case is the clients do not return for future fishing charters.

I am strongly in favor of the State Of New Jersey to split. The northern part of the state say north of Great Bay have a larger size Flounder of 18 or 18.5. The southern part of the state be able to keep a 17 or 17.5 Flounder.

Thanks for your time in this matter.

Capt. Craig Peters
Fish Tale Charters
fishtalecharters@comcast.net<<mailto:fishtalecharters@comcast.net>>
www.fishtalechartersoc.com<<http://www.fishtalechartersoc.com>>
Phone 609-391-8230

RECEIVED

JAN 22 2015

Atlantic States Marine
Fisheries Commission

I am 78 years old and have been fishing for 70 years I can remember when there was an abundance of fish for everyone. The commercial fishing industry has devastated the stocks of most of the species I can not understate why we tolerate their destruction of our fish.

The benefits that the recreation fisherman bring to the country far out weighs the commercials we do not need commercials in this country, of course this will never happen so the next best thing we can do is to make game fish status for flounder fluke bass - bass weakfish black fish whiting ling ! The two worst things that are allowed are flyke nets in our bays during the cold weather. number two is allowing the commercials to keep fluke under 18 inches. we throw fish under 18 inches back with the hope they grow to legal size but guess what the commercials catch them before that happens Recreation fisherman are being deprived of both fun and eating fresh caught fish

Roger Pfeiffer
854 Church Lane
Middletown NJ

07748

732 796 1171

From: Rafferty Jr, Rudolph [<mailto:Rudy.Rafferty@pbfenergy.com>]

Sent: Friday, January 02, 2015 1:04 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: flounder regs...

Please understand as a recreational fisherman in NEW JERSEY and fishing in Delaware Bay, we are held to a 18 ½ " flounder ..Delaware residents are able to enjoy 16" flounder as well as Maryland and Va. New Jersey fishermen must fish sometimes alongside these boats and fume as they keep what we must release!!!! What I am asking is uniform...unilateral rules and regs. That apply to shared waters and border states...

From: Riccardi, John [<mailto:John.Riccardi@sig.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2015 12:59 PM
To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Subject: Draft Addendum

New Jersey fluke regulations this year should go back to a 17 or 17.5 inch fish w a 5 fish bag limit. The 18.5 in limit is very hard to attain, and in the process causes countless numbers of fluke being released to die, wasting the resource. We are in effect reducing the population instead of trying to make it grow.

Thanks

John Riccardi
Susquehanna International Group
Equity Finance
John.Riccardi@sig.com
Ph. 610-617-2826
Fax 610-747-2044

From: Keyfileproducts@aol.com [mailto:Keyfileproducts@aol.com]

Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 12:10 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum

I would like to show my support for a reduced size limit for summer flounder in S. Jersey. We keep our boat in Cape May, NJ. My family & I have been fishing for flounder for over 45 years. My wife & 14 yr. old son love flounder fishing. Last year w/ the increase in size we hardly caught any keepers. It's hard to justify running 12-22 miles to the flounder grounds & only catching 1-2 keepers per trip. If you reduced the size to 17", it would at least allow us to keep 6-7 keepers per trip helping to justify spending \$100-\$125 for fuel.

Charles K. Rice

From: Brian Riordan [<mailto:surf1729@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 5:40 AM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum

I agree that NJ should be split into two zones. I have fished the back bays and Ocean of extreme South Jersey (Cape May County) my entire life. Our fishery is much different from the Northern part of the state. Our fish arrive into the bays earlier and depart for the Ocean earlier than up North. Our regulations here in South Jersey should mimic those in Delaware and Maryland and not North Jersey/New York.

Thank you.

-Brian Riordan

From: Ronald Risley [<mailto:formakos@msn.com>]

Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 4:49 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Fluke Regionalization Plans

I strongly urge adoption of option 5a since I believe it is the option that is the most fair to all states involved. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Capt. Ron Risley, Toms River, NJ

From: Scott Slousky [<mailto:sslousky@giroudtree.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 8:28 AM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft adendum

To whom it may concern

My name is Scot I am a 32yo avid fisherman from the OCNJ area. This past summer of the 30 fluke trips I made I did not catch a keeper flounder on one trip. All were just under the 18in keeper limit which I was happy to see so many young fluke there was never a trip I did not catch a good handful of fish. I am not a kill everything you catch person just because you can. However I feel like the suggested new regulations are very oppressive to recreational fisherman, and the already struggling charter business.

While I understand the need to stay on top of oceans resources I cant help but feel that the rec guys are taking the brunt of an issue that was not caused by us. I am not jaded to the fact that we have a hand in it either. A 2 fish limit is hardly worth spending the time effort and money to go out fishing. The fact is while I did not kill one fluke last year. I still had the option to keep a healthy limit. While 5 fish per man seems to me a little excessive. I believe A lowered limit would help all around

My proposed limits.

4 fish @ 18in

Also Impose strict regulations for the commercial fisherman. More undersized fish are killed in their nets per year that are thrown back than the rec guys take of legal fish. The recreational fisherman brings a lot of important tax dollars to the state of nj. My making us the whipping boy and taking our privlidges away only equates to less dollars in taxes an even more struggling charter business and more people wanting to do the wrong thing and poaching catches all around.

Thank you for your time

Scott Slousky
Certified Arborist PD 1661 A
Giroud Tree and Lawn Care
Phone # 215-682-7704
Fax # 215-682-9255

Statement of the problem

Overviewing the problems of the flounder fishery in the very most southern region of New Jersey Delaware Bay waters.

1. I am A Delaware Bay New Jersey Charter boat Captain and President of the Fortescue Captains and Boat Owners Association. There are approximately 22 commercial charter boats berthed in the port of Fortescue N.J. We fish from the port of Fortescue N.J. opposite the Delaware port of Bowers Beach. I have fished the Delaware Bay all my life and have been in competition with Delaware State Charter boats for a long time. Last year was one of the worst years New Jersey Charter boat Captains and bait and tackle shops faced with the (2014) 16 in fish regulations in Delaware. I lost around one half of my flounder charters not counting the other party and charter boats that sat idle while the Delaware charter boats fished because of their 16 inch and our 18 inch flounder regulations and the two contradicting seasons.
2. The second problem is New Jersey Charter boats that fish the Delaware Bay have to pay for Delaware Fishing License \$50.00, \$300.00 or \$600.00 The rest of New Jersey does not have this problem they don't fish the Delaware Bay. We fish the same fish stock and the same body of water but have to abide by the New Jersey flounder regulations which are very unfair to us because of it being the same body of water as Delaware charter boats fish. There is nothing more frustrating and bad for advertisement and business than fishing next to a Delaware Charter boat and my customers throwing back 16 inch fish and Delaware boats keeping them. Our customers come from Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Southern New Jersey areas, if they can catch and keep 16 inch flounder where do you think they will fish if the distances to a fishing port are just a little bit further they will fish where they can keep and catch the most fish. As a fishing industry in New Jersey we cannot compete with Delaware State advertising the home of the 16 inch flounder and the longer season when our borders are the same.
3. The third problem is The Delaware State border line touches New Jersey shoreline just south of the Salem power plant and travels north to beyond the Delaware Memorial Bridge so some of the New Jersey Charter Boats can't help but fish in Delaware waters.
4. I believe the only fair solution to conservation and equality would be keep the Delaware bay as a region by itself or place it with the State of Delaware but keep the seasons and regulations the same for the fisheries. The Delaware Bay on an average have flounder that are smaller than the fish North of us and in the ocean. So to achieve the least mortality rate we should have a size limit of 16 or 17 inches at four or five fish but for us to stay the same as Delaware State whatever the size and season is.

Regional option

Table 5. Option 2

This table has different size limits and seasons that will hurt the New Jersey Charter boat and Bait houses on the New Jersey side of the Delaware Bay and give The Delaware State Charter boats unfair advantage advertising over New Jersey Delaware Bay Charter Boats in season and fish size.

Table 6. Option3A

Table 7. Option 3B

These tables have different size limits in the middle of the State of New Jersey creating the same unfair advertising problems north of Egg Harbor.

Table 8. Option 4A

Table 9. Option 4B

These tables (16 inch 365 days) would be best for the Delaware Bay economy as the average fish here being smaller than the fish north it places the Delaware Bay in the southern region I believe the mortality rate would be less causing our fish stock to grow in the future.

Table 10. Option 5A

Table 11. Option 5B

These tables have the same size limits (17) and seasons (184) on both sides of the Delaware Bay keeping fishing and advertising fair for the same waters and Stock of fish. The difference being 1-1 ½ inches between the Delaware Bay north and Cape May and 1 inch difference between the Delaware Bay south and the Delaware ocean line. These two tables are the fairest and most equal tables to use keeping the fish size only one inch difference along the entire coast.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter

Don Stein 856-462-7314

President Fortescue Captains & Boat Owners Association.

From: Granville Printing [<mailto:sir@snet.net>]
Sent: Friday, January 16, 2015 3:00 PM
To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Subject: Concerning Draft Addendum XXVI - public comments

I support,

Option 2: Adaptive Regional Management

Option 1: Adaptive Regional Management StatusQuo

Management for 2015 and 2016

- 2) Using the adaptive regional approach
- 1) 2015 and 2016

Frank Stirna
80 Roosevelt Forest Drive
Stratford, Ct 06614

From: Joyce stokes [<mailto:althfshm1@verizon.net>]

Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 6:20 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum

Hi, I fish beside Delaware boats all the time and they keep 16" fluke while I have to throw them back so I would like NJ splite in half , I have not caught too many keepers lately.

Thank you

Allen Stokes

From: Barb326 [<mailto:barb326@comcast.net>]

Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 3:13 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum XXVI

Gentlemen,

As a concerned charter boat owner and captain, who only fishes the Delaware Bay exclusively, I would like to voice my opposition to Draft Addendum XXVI. I strongly believe that the 2015 flounder regulations for New Jersey should be the same as that of Delaware as it applies to the Delaware Bay. Since it is the same body of water, it would make sense to apply the same regulations to the entire bay. I believe that since this is a unique situation, it may justify the consideration of dividing New Jersey regulations either by way of a North/South designation or ocean/bay.

I respectfully request careful consideration of the above comments.

Thank you,

Captain Dale H. Sutton

From: ROBERT SWITZER [mailto:robert_switzer@msn.com]

Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 3:17 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Comment on ASMFC DRAFT ADDENDUM SUMMER FLOUNDER

To whom it may concern:

Regarding the new options for Summer Flounder regulations:

I am in favor of option 3, specifically option 3A

Which splits north and south jersey for summer flounder

Extends the south jersey season and reduces the south jersey minimum size limit.

Sincerely,

Robert Switzer

501 Weston Drive

SMITHVILLE, NJ 08205

From: tom trageser [tomtrageser@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 11:10 AM
To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy
Subject: 2015 fluke regulations

Dear sir.

In 2014 NJ fisheries managers caved to the will of NY politicians and the regionalization of fluke management started.

Like most NJ fisherman I opposed the plan and I still think it was an ineffective solution to a problem that I honestly don't believe exists.

This years regulatory options are even worse. They are confusing and it seems purposely.

With that being said I agree with the JCAA position of option 5A. Hoping for the possibility that 2015 size and bag limits for northern NJ remain the same or improve.

Thank you.

From: dave tronieri [<mailto:tronieri@hotmail.com>]

Sent: Friday, January 23, 2015 12:40 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Summer Fluke Regs

Good afternoon. My name is David A. Tronieri. I am a school teacher in Woodbury NJ and an avid fisherman in the South Jersey waters.

It has recently been brought to my attention that the 2015 Summer Fluke Regulations are being discussed today. Unfortunately, I can not be there in person. However, I would like to add my comments and cast my vote for the upcoming season.

As I understand it one of the possibilities for summer fluke regs is to lower the limit to 17 inches for a keeper fluke. This is provided the fish is caught in the "southern" region of the state of New Jersey with Great Bay being the dividing line between North and South.

At this time I would like to support this decision and vote YES for this plan. I am also aware that many of the people I go fishing with are also in favor of this decision.

Please feel free to contact me at this email address with any questions or comments you may have.

Thank you for your time and have a safe and comfortable winter. See you in the spring.

Sincerely, David A. Tronieri

From: Matt Trucks [<mailto:matt@theplastichull.net>]

Sent: Friday, January 23, 2015 12:17 AM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum XXVI

As a Kayak angler in the 2014 fluke season abiding by the 18 inch regulation out of 16 days of fluke fishing I was able to keep a total of 4 fish. I fish the northern waters by Sandy Hook. A 19 inch limit is unfavorable as 80% of my catch was in the 16 inch range last year. The previous year the limit was dropped to 5 fish but the size added to 18 inches from 17.5 and s 6 fish limit. A report stating New Jersey anglers were 120% over quota. I never understood this as Superstorm Sandy wiped out 95% of the states recreational angler fleet. There were really no boats until late in the fluke season of 2013.

The fish population is strong in North Jersey in 2014 but all in the range of 12 – 16 inch fish most of the time catching 10-15 a day. The bigger fish may be being caught out in the ocean and on long island NY. My findings are that last year the fish 18” and over were not present.

For 2015 splitting the state of NJ in half is not a good idea at all and raising the size limit means for me I might as well not even target fluke anymore.

Thanks for your time.

Matthew Trucks

-----Original Message-----

From: Louis Truppi [<mailto:louistruppi@Intassoc.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 9:08 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Fluke issues

I personally agree with and support the JCAA 's position on fluke fisheries issues!

Sent from my iPhone

From: Jim M [<mailto:jimmyt927@hotmail.com>]

Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 11:36 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum XXVI

Dear Kirby Rootes-Murdy,

Please allow NJ anglers the right to **legally** take home more fluke this year. I fish every weekend from March through December in South Jersey and in my experience there is no shortage of fluke. They are like panfish in a freshwater stream. They are everywhere. I have a hard time understanding why fluke regs are so strict considering the health of the stock is so strong.

Please consider a longer fluke season for the purpose of taking pressure off other fisheries like stripers and tog.

I favor a 8 fish fluke limit at 16" with a season that runs from April 1 - Dec 31.

Thank you for reading my comments.

Jim Tyrrell

From: nverducci@comcast.net [<mailto:nverducci@comcast.net>]

Sent: Monday, January 19, 2015 1:30 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: NJ Fluke Regulations

With the upcoming fishing season a few months away I would like to provide my opinion on the upcoming fluke season. I am a resident of Marmora, NJ in Cape May County, NJ. I've been a fishermen since I've been 6 years old(now 45), and it is becoming more and more confusing how the regulations are implemented. Last year the idea of combining NJ with NY and Conn. was absurd. The back waters in my area begin holding fluke in April, and by the time the season begins most of the keeper size fish are already on their way out of the back waters and moving into the inlets. NJ is small geographically, but the differences in fishing is like night and day. The proposed split of limits in NJ is the only sensible choice. I urge you to not group South Jersey with New York. It makes no sense and furthermore I really feel a slot fish will be the only way to assure we maintain a healthy stock for flounder. The larger fish we are allowed to keep are the breeders that provide for the future of the fishery. Thank you for your time.

Nick Verducci
4 Ocean Ave
Marmora, NJ 08223

From: Paul W [<mailto:pwjr@optonline.net>]

Sent: Saturday, January 17, 2015 11:28 AM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: draft add: XXVI

Dear Representative:

As a recreational fisherman, I would like to suggest that we drop the bag limit to four instead of five.

Then hopefully, we could drop the size limit from eighteen inches to seventeen and one-half inches.

Then maybe, we could adjust the season to be a little bit longer. I don't think we used up our recreational quota

on summer flounder and I noticed that New York never closed the commercial summer flounder season but did reduce the poundage.

I thank you for letting me comment and may the fishing Gods be with you.

Paul W.

From: Frank Walsh [<mailto:squidder329@gmail.com>]

Sent: Saturday, January 17, 2015 7:10 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Summer Flounder

Dear Sir,

I'm strongly in favor of the splitting the size limits for northern and southern New Jersey. I fish in the southern part of the state and believe this would give me the opportunity to have fish for the table. I've made numerous trips during which I caught shorts and for the most part I was able to release them unharmed. I wish I could say that for most fishermen.

This is my simplistic reasoning but in fairness these are to valid concerns of the southern New Jersey fisherman.

Thank You,
Frank Walsh
Cape May, NJ.

From: philip [<mailto:psuwelsh@gmail.com>]

Sent: Friday, January 16, 2015 8:19 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: Draft Addendum XXVI)

Hello,

I understand that comments about the New Jersey fluke fishing regs should be sent to you. (I believe you and I spoke last spring on the phone....thanks for your time by the way.) I live in Stone Harbor and am an avid fluke fisherman. While the size, bag limit and season dates can and should be discussed, I feel it is most important that those who fish in the same areas from different states have the same regs.

I fish the Cape May reef, Reef Site 11, the Old Grounds, and other areas in between. I find it totally inappropriate that Delaware and Ocean City MD fisherman can fish 365 days and a 16" minimum while we in South Jersey who fish (mostly) the exact same grounds have a short season and 18" minimum or higher. Further, I do not think that having NJ split to accommodate giving South Jersey the same regs as MD and Delaware is a logistical nightmare at all. I rarely see boats from anywhere north of Ocean City NJ fishing these grounds. It is too far for head boats and day charters due to time needed and too far the recreational angler to go due to fuel costs. Sure, a boat here and there makes it but the vast number of boats are from Avalon south and from Ocean City north.

I would also propose the following to be considered:

a. Season - if limiting days is required, I would prefer that the season extend into October and open later, perhaps Memorial day weekend. Or, split the season and open from early May through the first week in June and then close it for three or four weeks. The back bay fish that are legal size are mostly picked over and the June period is dead in the ocean. I don't want to use up precious days for those dead June weeks. The fishing in the ocean doesn't really get going until mid July and while the weather in Sept has a big part to play, having a season that extends into early October would be my preference as the fish seem to be around until then.

b. Size - I would love to see something that gives us a fish or two from 16-18" daily, and a slot of three fish from 18-25 inches and one >25, or, something like that. I have heard and understand that the big fluke are mostly females and the smaller fish are better to eat as we all know. In Alaska, halibut are limited to a certain number and they have a slot ability. I don't see why NJ can't do the same.

c. Bag Limit - a bag limit of 5 fish per person is quite adequate, especially at >18" for each legal fish. It is rare that any boat I know limits out except for the hottest time in mid August. I refer you to (b) above as it would allow some fish to be caught even in the slower periods.

Above all, the region of Ocean City MD north, including Delaware, up to the Strathmere Inlet MUST have the same regs. It is just not fair the way it was last summer. I appreciate being able to input to this process.

Thanks,

Philip Welsh
Stone Harbor, NJ

From: wilk@rcn.com [<mailto:wilk@rcn.com>]

Sent: Sunday, January 18, 2015 9:14 AM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: 2015 summer flounder (fluke) regulations comment

I own and operate Babu Sport Fishing Charters, Inc. located in Brigantine, NJ. Last season with the 18.5 inch size limit, I did not have any trips where I was able to catch limits for my customers fishing the bays behind Brigantine, and Atlantic City. In fact, most of the fish were between 14 and 17.5 inches which results in a significant death rate for the fish returned to the water, and no fish for my customers dinner. My customers just want to be able to have a few fish for dinner, but the current regulations preclude this from occurring.

I would like to see the New Jersey regulations split between North and South with the dividing line at about Barnagate Inlet or Little Egg Inlet. The North should maintain the 18.5 inch size with the South being the same as Delaware. The bag limit could be reduced to as little as two fish if necessary. I know many of the charter captains feel that they need more than two fish, but I fished as a charter captain on Maryland's Chesapeake Bay for thirteen years where the summer size and bag regulations for striper bass was 2 fish at 18 inches. Even with these Maryland regulations the charter fishing industry was robust, and a 18 inch striper yields less meat for dinner than a 16.5 inch fluke.

Thank you reading my comments. If you would like to discuss further, please contact me.

Capt. John Wilkinson

www.babucharters.com

410-320-9351

From: . . [mailto:walter_nancy@hotmail.com]

Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2015 8:00 PM

To: Kirby Rootes-Murdy

Subject: jersey shore fishing; JCAA comment on fluke plan

Dear Kerby,

I am a New Jersey angler in the Raritan bay and I am upset about the proposed changes in NJ fluke fishing. I read the letter by Paul Haertel from the JCAA and agree with him. Me and my family enjoy fluke fishing and don't want changes again. Upping the size limit again or shortening the season just doesn't seem fair. Please make a fair decision for us and keep us fishing so we can keep our youth fishing and not destroying a great recreation. Thank you for listening.

Walter Wojcik