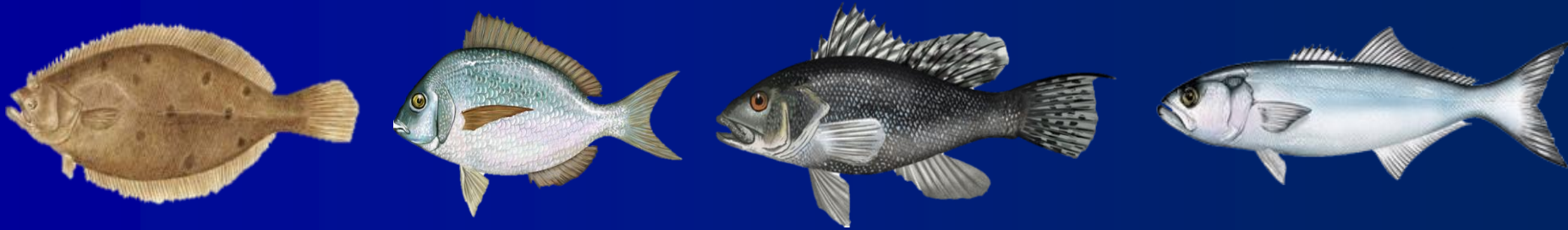




# Recreational Sector Separation and Data Collection Amendment



## Scoping Hearings

February-March 2025

# Presentation Outline

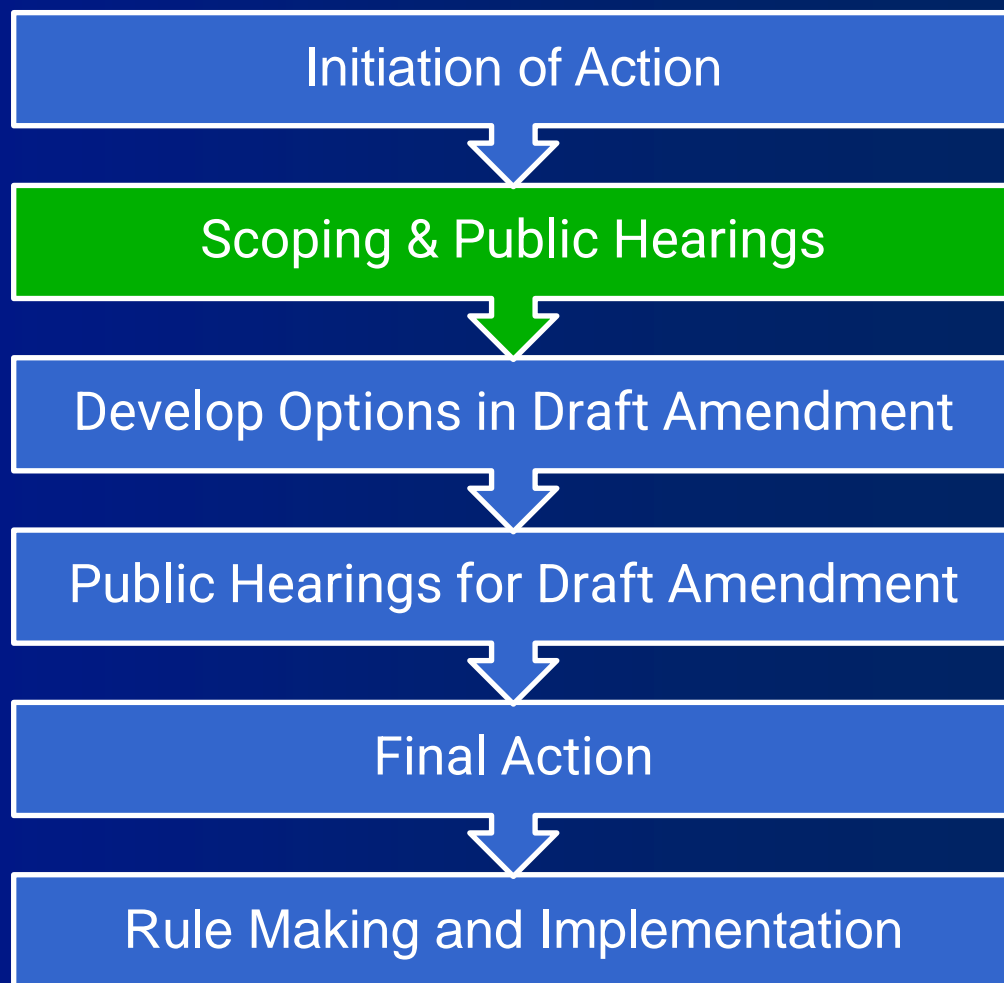
- What is scoping?
- Amendment background
- Overview of issues in the Scoping/Public Information Document (PID)
- How to provide public comment



# What is scoping?

- Provides the public opportunity to identify and provide input on major issues
- Asks public how they would like to see these issues addressed

## Amendment Process



# Management Background



**Mid-Atlantic Fishery  
Management Council**

Federal waters (>3 miles)



**Atlantic States Marine  
Fisheries Commission**

State waters (0-3 miles)

**Work together to develop most aspects of the Fishery Management  
Plans for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish**

# Amendment Background

- Initiated in October 2020 as part of a comprehensive effort to address recreational management issues
- Put on hold to prioritize development of other management actions
  - Development resumed Fall 2024
- December 2024: Council and Commission approved the Scoping/Public Information Document (PID) for public comment

# Issues for Scoping



1. Consider managing for-hire (party/charter) recreational fisheries separately from shore/private fishing modes (sector separation)
2. Consider tools to enhance/supplement recreational data collection and improve its use

# ISSUE 1: SECTOR SEPARATION



# Issue 1: Sector Separation

- Recreational fisheries include for-hire (i.e., headboats and charter) and private rec. sectors (i.e., shore and private/rental boats)
- Single harvest target with performance and accountability measures applied collectively; same measures in many cases
- Differing preferences, motivations, operational needs, and reporting requirements





# Issue 1: Sector Separation

- Managing separately could allow for more tailored management approaches
  - Better account for differing preferences and motivations
  - Better use of for-hire reported data



# Issue 1: Sector Separation

- However, would introduce complexity
  - Some concern it could create regulation imbalances, conflicts, perceived inequity
  - May also require use of data that is more uncertain when broken down by sector



Photo: John McMurray

# Issue 1: Sector Separation

## Potential Management Approaches



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



Separate management measures (uniform approaches/guidelines)



Other approaches identified through scoping

# Issue 1 Public Comment Questions

- Do you believe recreational sector separation should be explored for these fisheries? Why or why not?
- Which sector separation approaches do you think would be most appropriate and why?
- If sector separation is pursued, should the Council and Commission consider setting limits on the ability to obtain or retain for-hire permits?
- What else should be considered relative to recreational sector separation?



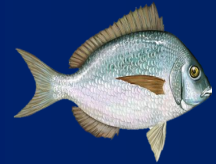
Photo: John McMurray

# **ISSUE 2: RECREATIONAL DATA COLLECTION**



## Issue 2: Recreational Data Collection

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



# Issue 2: Recreational Data Collection

## Potential Management Approaches



Mandatory recreational reporting



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



Enhanced for-hire VTR requirements



Voluntary reporting program



Other approaches identified through scoping

The Council/Commission will consider lessons previously learned on these issues from around the country

# MRIP Improvements

- Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) still considered best scientific information available for these species; will continue to be used
  - This amendment *will not* address MRIP estimation methodology
- Council and Commission continue to engage with NOAA Fisheries on MRIP improvements
  - Ongoing testing of Fishing Effort Survey (FES) improvements based on 2023 pilot study
  - Revised catch/effort estimates possible in 2026 (at the earliest); any revisions could impact options developed under this amendment



# Issue 2 Public Comment Questions

- How do you think recreational data collection could be improved?
- Should private/shore reporting requirements or voluntary programs be considered in this amendment? Why or why not?
- Are revisions to for-hire data collection requirements needed? What types of changes should be considered?
- What else should be considered relative to recreational data collection and catch estimation?



# Tentative Amendment Timeline

*As of February 2025*

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

# Scoping Hearing Schedule

<b>Date and Hearing Format</b>	<b>State/Agency</b>
<b>Tuesday, February 25, 2025</b> <i>Webinar Hearing</i>	New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection
<b>Wednesday, February 26, 2025</b> <i>Hybrid Hearing</i>	New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation and Connecticut Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection  <i>New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation 123 Kings Park Blvd., Nissequogue River Park, Kings Park, NY 11754</i>
<b>Thursday, February 27, 2025</b> <i>Hybrid Hearing</i>	Rhode Island Dept. of Environmental Management  <i>University of Rhode Island Bay Campus Corless Auditorium 215 South Ferry Road, Narragansett, RI 02882</i>
<b>Tuesday, March 4, 2025</b> <i>Webinar Hearing</i>	Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife, Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, and North Carolina Dept. of Environmental Quality
<b>Wednesday, March 5, 2025</b> <i>Webinar Hearing</i>	Maine Dept. of Marine Resources, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, and Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

# How to Submit Public Comment

- You can submit **written comments** through one of the following methods:
  - **Online** at: <https://mafmc.knack.com/public-comments#recreational-sector-separation-data-collection/>
  - **Email** to: [kdancy@mafmc.org](mailto:kdancy@mafmc.org)
  - **Mail** to: Dr. Chris Moore, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, 800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901

Subject line: "Recreational Sector Separation and Data Collection"

Deadline for Public Comments is 11:59 PM,  
Thursday, March 20, 2025

# Resources

Public Information/Scoping Document, background info, and other documents:

<https://www.mafmc.org/rec-sector-data-amendment>

Public Hearing Information:

<https://asmfc.org/events/>

<https://www.mafmc.org/council-events>

YouTube Presentation Recording:



**ASMFCvideos**

142 subscribers



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