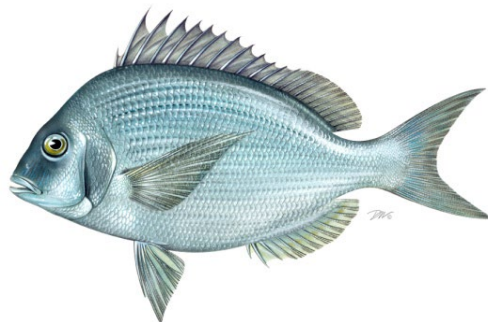


INTERSTATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Scup

Species Range

US/Canadian Border-North Carolina (north of Cape Hatteras); the South Atlantic Council manages the southern range – North Carolina (south of Cape Hatteras)-Florida



Management Unit

Scup is managed jointly by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (EEZ) and the ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board (state waters).

Stock Status

The 2023 management track stock assessment report indicates that the stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring.

Reference Points

- F Threshold = $F_{MS\ PROXY} = F_{40\%} = 0.190$
 - Current (2022) = 0.098
- Spawning Stock Biomass threshold ($1/2\ SSB_{MSYPROXY}$) = 86.64 million lbs
- Spawning Stock Biomass target ($SSB_{MSYPROXY}$) = 173.27 million lbs
 - Current SSB (2022) = 425.68 million lbs

Fishing mortality was estimated to be 0.098 in 2022, below the fishing mortality threshold of 0.190. Spawning stock biomass (SSB) was estimated to be 425.68 million pounds, over two times the updated biomass target reference point. The average recruitment from 1984 to 2022 is 147 million fish at age 0. The 2015 year class is estimated to be the largest in the time series at 569 million fish, while the 2017-2022 year classes are estimated to be below average. Stock biomass is projected to further decrease toward the target in the short term unless more above average year classes recruit to the stock.

Next scheduled stock assessment

June 2025

Involved States and Jurisdictions

MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, DE, MD, VA, NC, NOAA Fisheries

Active Boards/Committees

ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board; Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council; ASMFC Technical Committee (evaluates and recommends state-specific management measures); Joint Monitoring Committee (recommends yearly specifications for commercial and recreational measures to joint Management Board); ASMFC Plan Review Team (reviews state compliance reports and FMP review); SAW Southern Demersal Working Group; Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Advisory Panel.

Chairs

Board, Chair – Nichola Meserve (12/2023); Vice-Chair – John Maniscalco (8/2024)
Technical Committee, Chair – Rachel Sysak (01/2025); Vice-Chair – Vacant
Advisory Panel, Chair – Vacant

Staff Lead

Chelsea Tuohy, ctuohy@asmfc.org

Management Plan History

[Amendment 8 \(March 1996\)](#)

The Commission and MAFMC adopted the Scup Fishery Management Plan into the Summer Flounder FMP through Amendment 8.

The objectives of the FMP are to:

- Reduce fishing mortality in the scup fishery to ensure that overfishing does not occur.
- Reduce fishing mortality on immature scup to increase spawning stock biomass.
- Improve the yield from the fisheries.
- Promote compatible management regulations between state and federal jurisdictions.
- Promote uniform and effective enforcement of regulations.
- Minimize regulations to achieve the management objectives stated above.

Amendment 12 (1998)

Specifically, this amendment revises the overfishing definitions for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass and addresses the new and revised National Standards relative to the existing management measures. In addition, this amendment adds a framework adjustment procedure that allows the Board to add or modify management measures through a streamlined public review process via addenda.

[Addendum III \(March 2001\)](#)

The purpose of this Addendum, which was adopted by the states under Amendment 12, is to establish recreational fishing specifications for 2001 for summer flounder and for scup. Its provisions have no application beyond 2001.

[Addendum IV \(January 2001\)](#)

The purpose of this Addendum, which was adopted by the states under Amendment 12, is to harmonize the different procedures for setting specifications under the fishery management plans for these three species, by adopting a procedure that clarifies the ability of the states to operate effectively and consistently with basic concepts of state sovereignty.

[Addendum V \(February 2002\)](#)

Addendum V to the Scup Fishery Management Plan establishes the state-specific shares of the 2002 summer period quota.

[Addendum VII \(February 2002\)](#)

The purpose of this Addendum, which was adopted by the states under Amendment 12, is to establish recreational fishing specifications for scup for 2002. Its provisions have no application beyond 2002.

[Addendum IX \(March 2003\)](#)

The purpose of this Addendum, which was adopted by the states under Amendment 12, is to establish recreational fishing specifications for scup in 2003. The regional approach outlined in this addendum is still used currently. Massachusetts through New York, which comprise 97% of recreational harvest, annually adopt more restrictive measures than the coastwide measures to constrain harvest to the RHL.

[Addendum XI \(January 2004\)](#)

This Addendum establishes a management system that will constrain the recreational scup fishery to the coastwide recreational harvest limit, and allow states to customize scup recreational management measures in order to deal with burden issues associated with the implementation of coastwide measures. It also proposes a management process that minimizes the administrative burden when implementing conservation equivalency.

[Addendum XIII \(August 2004\)](#)

This Addendum modifies the FMP so that, within a given year, TALs for summer flounder, scup, and/or black sea bass can be specified for up to three years.

[Addendum XIX \(August 2007\)](#)

Scup Commercial Summer State-by-State Quota Share.	
State	% of Summer Quota
ME	0.1210%
NH	0.0000%
MA	21.5853%
RI	56.1894%
CT	3.1537%
NY	15.8232%
NJ	2.9164%
DE	0.0000%
MD	0.0119%
VA	0.1650%
NC	0.0249%
Total	100.0000%

This Addendum broadens the descriptions of stock status determination criteria contained within the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP to allow for greater flexibility in those definitions, while maintaining objective and measurable status determination criteria for identifying when stocks or stock complexes covered by the FMP are overfished. It establishes acceptable categories of peer-review for stock status determination criteria. When these specific peer-review metrics are met and new or updated information is available, the new or revised stock status determination criteria may be incorporated by the Commission directly into the annual management measures for each species.

[Addendum XX \(November 2009\)](#)

This Addendum sets policies to reconcile quota overages to address minor inadvertent quota overages. It streamlines the quota transfer process and establishes clear policies and administrative protocols to guide the allocation of transfers from states with underages to states with overages. It also allows for quota transfers to reconcile quota overages after year's end.

[Addendum XXIX \(May 2017\)](#)

This Addendum shortens the length of the commercial scup summer period and extends the length of the winter II period. The change in the quota period lengths allows for higher possession limits for a longer period of time each year, increasing the likelihood that the commercial fishery will fully harvest the quota. The quota allocation for each period remains unchanged. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council also took the same action through Framework 10.

[Addendum XXXI \(December 2018\)](#)

This Addendum recommends NOAA Fisheries establish a transit area through which non-federally permitted for-hire and commercial vessels, in possession of scup, could transit between the Rhode Island state waters surrounding Block Island and the coastal state waters of Rhode Island. Additionally, this Addendum allows for the use maximum sizes in addition to minimum sizes, commonly referred to as slot limits, to control catch in the scup recreational fisheries within state waters.

[Amendment 22 \(December 2021\)](#)

This amendment made changes to the commercial and recreational sector allocations for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass. The commercial and recreational sector allocations for scup were revised from 78% commercial and 22% recreational (catch-based) to 65% commercial and 35% recreational (catch-based) to better reflect the current understanding of the historic proportions of catch and landings from these two sectors. The previous allocations were revised to use the same "base years" (the time periods used to set the current allocations), but updated with new data, including the revised estimates of recreational catch from the Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) and changes made to commercial catch data.

[Addendum XXXIV \(June 2022\)](#)

Addendum XXXIV and a Council Framework modified the process for setting recreational measures and made minor modifications to the recreational accountability measures. The new process will give greater consideration to stock status when determining whether recreational measures should be restricted, liberalized, or remain unchanged for the upcoming two years. The new process is intended for use starting in 2023 and will sunset no later than the end of 2025 with a goal of implementing an improved process by the beginning of 2026.

Addendum XXXVI (April 2025)

Addendum XXXVI to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP, Addendum II to the Bluefish FMP, and a Council Framework made further modifications to the process for setting recreational measures and accountability measures for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish. The changes, which include modifications the Percent Change Approach based on lessons learned over the past few years, will be implemented in two phases.

The first phase of changes aims to better account for stock status when setting measures and will create more opportunities for stability in management measures. These changes will take effect starting with the 2026 recreational measures for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass. The Council and Policy Board delayed the implementation of these changes for bluefish until 2028 to allow time for development of an appropriate methodology for evaluating the impacts of measures on bluefish harvest and discards. The bluefish stock has been under a rebuilding plan since 2022, and recreational measures will continue to be set based on the rebuilding plan until the stock is declared rebuilt. The second phase of modifications, which will be implemented for setting 2030 recreational measures and beyond, will update the process to use a catch-based target. The Council and Policy Board delayed the transition to a catch-based target until 2030 to allow time for additional analysis on the potential impacts to measures.

Quota Management

Total annual quotas are divided between the recreational fishery (35%) and the commercial fishery (65%). Specific management measures for the commercial fishery include minimum size limits, minimum mesh requirements for trawls, and closed seasons. The commercial fishery is split into 3 seasons: Winter I (45.11%): January-April (coastwide quota with trip limits), Summer Period (38.95%): May-September (state quotas (see table for shares) and regulations), and Winter II (15.94%): October-December (coastwide quota and trip limits). The commercial fishery quota is monitored by the NMFS. Weekly quota updates are found on the GARFO webpage https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/ro/fso/reports/reports_frame.htm Recreational fishery management measures include a combination of minimum size limits, bag limits and fishing seasons.

Annual Events:

- December: Final commercial allocation memo sent to the Board, depending on the release of final landings data.

- December/January: TC meets to evaluate previous year's recreational harvest by state and evaluate estimates of next year's recreational harvest*. TC members will work individually or regionally, with calls as needed, to make recommendations on how management measures should be adjusted to achieve but not exceed the recreational harvest limit.
- February-March: The Board approves state/regional proposals of recreational management measures.*
- April-May: This year's state/regional recreational measures approved by the Board are communicated to the NOAA Greater Atlantic Regional Office for their consideration in setting state management measures.
- June 1: Compliance reports are due. Prior to next Board Meeting, the PRT reviews the FMP Review which includes any compliance issues.
- July: Monitoring Committee meets to outline recommendations for the upcoming year's fishing regulations including any proposed changes to the minimum fish size, mesh size, escape vent sizes, or other compliance criteria for the commercial fishery, as well as to recommend changes to the quota to account for management uncertainty. The Monitoring Committee forwards recommendations to the Board and Council.*
- August: Board and Council meet jointly at the MAFMC August meeting to adopt an ABC, commercial quota, recreational harvest limit, and to set commercial specifications.
- November: Monitoring Committee meets to develop recommendations for the upcoming year's recreational measures, including minimum fish size, season, and possession limit. The Monitoring Committee forwards recommendations to the Board and Council.*
- December: Board and Council meet jointly at the MAFMC December meeting to set recreational specifications.

* With the adoption of Addendum XXXVI, this process now may only occur every two years, after the completion of a management track assessment that provides updated information on specifications. In interim years, the Council and Board review the catch and landings limits compared to the management measures. They may revise the measures in interim years if new data such as a research track stock assessment or other technical reports suggest the measures are not performing as expected or if a change is needed for other reasons.