Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Vision: Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

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ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Board Approves Addendum XXX for Recreational Black Sea Bass Management

Arlington, VA – The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board approved Addendum XXX to the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan. The Addendum establishes a regional allocation of the coastwide Recreational Harvest Limit (RHL) to address state concerns regarding equity and accountability in recreational black sea bass management.

From 2012-2016, the recreational fishery was managed under an ad-hoc regional management approach, whereby the states of Massachusetts through New Jersey individually crafted measures aimed at adjusting harvest by the same percentage, while the states of Delaware through North Carolina set their regulations consistent with the federal waters measures. While this approach allowed the states flexibility in setting management measures, some states expressed a need for increased equity and accountability in managing harvest to coastwide catch limits.

Accounting for geographic differences in the stock and fishery interests, Addendum XXX uses a combination of exploitable biomass information from the latest stock assessment and historical harvest to regionally allocate the coastwide RHL. The final allocation is based on a hybrid of the allocation options that were presented in the Draft Addendum. The three management regions are defined as Massachusetts through New York, New Jersey as a state-specific region, and Delaware through North Carolina; their respective allocations of the 2018 coastwide RHL are 61.35%, 30.24%, and 8.41%. The Technical Committee will work with the states to develop regional proposals for Board review and approval in March 2018.

To improve accountability, the states within each region will be collectively responsible for managing harvest to their regional allocation through the cooperative development of recreational measures. To increase regional consistency in measures, each region will establish a standard set of measures, with each state in the region afforded the flexibility to adjust their measures up to one inch in minimum size and three fish in possession limit. The Addendum also initiates the development of a new process for

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species.

evaluation and specification of measures against the annual catch limit, which aims to provide more year-to-year stability in management measures.

The Addendum will be available on the Commission website, www.asmfc.org, on the Black Sea Bass webpage by late February. For more information, please contact Caitlin Starks, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at cstarks@asmfc.org or 703.842.0740.

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