Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

NEWS RELEASE

Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations of all Atlantic coast fish species, or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015

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ASMFC Board Takes Action on Scup, Black Sea Bass and Summer Flounder Management Measures

Alexandria, VA – The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board amended the state scup recreational reductions for the 2004 fishery, initiated an addendum for the 2005 and 2006 black sea bass commercial fishery, and considered a New York proposal on summer flounder recreational reductions.

The Board amended scup reductions required by Addendum XI to the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Addendum XI required states in the northern region (New York through Massachusetts) to reduce their landings by 53% through a regional management approach. Based on 2003 landings, the following percent reductions are now required: Massachusetts – 40%, Rhode Island – 25%, Connecticut– 57%, and New York – 58%. This change was collectively brought forward by the northern states, who represent 97% of the scup recreational harvest. The northern states will submit scup recreational management measures for technical review within two weeks. The southern states management measures remain consistent. New Jersey has a 10-inch minimum size, 50 fish bag limit and a season of July 1 – December 31, and Delaware through North Carolina maintain an 8-inch minimum size, 50 fish bag limit and open season.

The Board also approved initiation of Addendum XII to the FMP. The addendum intends to extend the current state-by-state black sea bass allocation system for the 2005 and 2006 fishing years. State-specific shares are as follows: Maine – 0.5%, New York – 7%, New Hampshire – 0.5%, New Jersey – 20%, Massachusetts –13%, Delaware – 5%, Rhode Island – 11%, Maryland – 11%, Connecticut – 1%, Virginia – 20%, and North Carolina – 11%. The Addendum outlining the black sea bass commercial fishery management will expire on January 1, 2004. Public comment for the Addendum XII will be solicited after the May Commission Board meeting and final action on the addendum will be taken at the August meeting in Alexandria, Virginia.

The State of New York proposed to reduce its projected recreational summer flounder landings for 2004 by 20% if (1) the Technical Committee verifies that the final measures New York selects achieve a 20% reduction; and (2) New York maintains such measures in place for the 2004, 2005, and 2006 fishing years. New York faces a 48.5% reduction of its summer flounder recreational fishery due to the highest recreational catch estimate of fluke in New York since the start of the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey in 1981. This management approach would alleviate impact on New York anglers and recreational fishing businesses harvesting fluke. After thoughtful deliberation, the Board decided to not approve the proposal but agreed to continue to explore alternate approaches to effectively managing the recreational summer flounder fishery coastwide. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns at (202) 289-6400, ext. 330 or tkerns@asmfc.org. PR04-09

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.