

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board

March 5, 2026
1:00 – 2:30 p.m.
Webinar

Webinar: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2051392282646884951>

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Draft Agenda

The times listed are approximate; the order in which these items will be taken is subject to change; other items may be added as necessary.

1. Welcome/Call to Order (*J. Maniscalco*) 1:00 p.m.
2. Board Consent 1:00 p.m.
 - Approval of Agenda
3. Public Comment 1:05 p.m.
4. Consider Final Approval of Proposed Black Sea Bass Recreational Measures for the 2026-2027 Fishing Years **Final Action** 1:15 p.m.
 - Review Proposed Regional Measures (*T. Bauer*)
 - Consider Final Approval of Proposed Regional Measures
5. Other Business/Adjourn 2:30 p.m.

MEETING OVERVIEW

Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board
March 5, 2026
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Chair: John Maniscalco (NY) Assumed Chairmanship: 12/25	Technical Committee Chair: Rachel Sysak (NY)	Law Enforcement Committee Representative: Snellbaker (MD)
Vice Chair: Vacant	Advisory Panel Chair: Vacant	Previous Board Meeting: February 4, 2026
Voting Members: NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC, NMFS, USFWS (13 votes)		

2. Board Consent

- Approval of Agenda

3. Public Comment – At the beginning of the meeting public comment will be taken on items not on the agenda. Individuals that wish to speak at this time must sign-in at the beginning of the meeting. For agenda items that have already gone out for public hearing and/or have had a public comment period that has closed, the Board Chair may determine that additional public comment will not provide additional information. In this circumstance the Chair will not allow additional public comment on an issue. For agenda items that the public has not had a chance to provide input, the Board Chair may allow limited opportunity for comment. The Board Chair has the discretion to limit the number of speakers and/or the length of each comment.

4. Consider Final Approval of Proposed Black Sea Bass Recreational Measures for the 2026-2027 Fishing Years (1:15-2:30 p.m.) Final Action

Background

- In December 2025, the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board (Board) and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) jointly approved status quo recreational measures for summer flounder and scup for 2026-2027, as well as a 20% liberalization from status quo recreational harvest for black sea bass. In the event black sea bass recreational measures are to be liberalized, Addendum XXXII to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan directs the Board to determine how the coastwide harvest liberalization will be distributed among the three regions for black sea bass (Massachusetts through New York, New Jersey, and Delaware through North Carolina).
- In February 2026, the Board approved the distribution of the 20% coastwide liberalization as follows: southern region will be allowed a 16.5% liberalization; the northern region shall not exceed a 27% liberalization; and New Jersey will receive the remaining liberalization from the northern and southern regions.
- Following the February meeting, states used the Recreation Demand Model (RDM) to identify sets of measures that meet but do not exceed the allowed coastwide liberalization. Regions submitted their proposed recreational measure options on February 26, 2026 (**Supplemental Materials**).

Presentations

- Proposed Regional Measures by T. Bauer

Board Actions for Consideration

- Consider Final Approval of Proposed Regional Measures

5. Other Business/Adjourn



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board
FROM: Tracey Bauer, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator February
DATE: February 27, 2026
SUBJECT: Proposed Black Sea Bass Management Measures for 2026-2027

Background

In December 2025, the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board (Board) and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) met jointly to set 2026 and 2027 recreational management measures for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass. The Board and Council approved a 20% liberalization for black sea bass in 2026. In 2027, recreational management measures for black sea bass will remain status quo from 2026. Summer flounder and scup recreational management measures will remain status quo in 2026 and 2027. Status quo recreational management measures for summer flounder and scup may be found in Tables 6 and 7.

For black sea bass, the Board and Council opted to proceed with the regional conservation equivalency processes as outlined in [Addenda XXXI](#) and XXXII, as opposed to implementing uniform coastwide measures. [Addendum XXXII](#) established a three-region approach to setting recreational management measures for black sea bass where regions are defined as Massachusetts-New York, New Jersey, and Delaware-North Carolina (North of Cape Hatteras). Each time recreational management measures are set, the Board may specify how a liberalization or reduction in harvest is distributed among the regions (resulting in de facto regional harvest targets), based on factors including (but not limited to) resource distribution and expected availability, angler effort, prior year fishery performance, and Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Technical Committee (TC) recommendations. The regions will then develop recreational measures that achieve the coastwide recreational harvest target. Additionally, states within a region will work together to develop recreational management measures that aim to achieve but not exceed the regional recreational harvest targets. However, states within a region do not need to propose or implement identical recreational management measures.

The Board met on February 4, 2026 to discuss the regional distribution of the coastwide 20% liberalization in harvest, approving the distribution of the 20% coastwide liberalization as follows: the southern region will be allowed a 16.5% liberalization; the northern region shall not exceed a 27% liberalization; and New Jersey will receive the remaining liberalization from the northern and southern regions.

Regulations proposed by each state are organized by region and state in Tables 1 – 4, with the associated median harvest estimated by the Recreation Demand Model (RDM) and resulting percent liberalization from status quo. The median estimated coastwide liberalization for every combination of the options proposed by the three regions can be found in Table 5.

M26-17

Table 1. Status quo and the proposed black sea bass management measures for each of the northern region states, which together form a single northern region option, NR2.

State	Option	Mode	Size Limit	Possession Limit	Open Season
MASSACHUSETTS	NR1 (Status Quo)	All	16.5"	4	May 17 – Sept 1
	NR2	All	16"	4	May 16 – Aug 31
				2	Sept 1 – Oct 14
RHODE ISLAND	NR1 (Status Quo)	Private/ Shore	16.5"	2	May 22 – Aug 26
				3	Aug 27 – Dec 31
		For-Hire	16"	2	June 18 – Aug 31
				6	Sept 1 – Dec 31
	NR2	Private/ Shore	16"	3	May 16 – Dec 31
		For-Hire		4	May 16 – Aug 31
6	Sept 1 – Dec 31				
CONNECTICUT	NR1 (Status Quo)	Private/ Shore	16"	5	May 17 – June 23; July 8 – Nov 25
		Authorized For-Hire Monitoring Program Vessels		5	May 17 – Aug 31
				7	Sept 1 – Dec 31
	NR2	Private/ Shore	15.5"	4	May 16 – Nov 25
		For-Hire		4	May 16 – Aug 31
				6	Sept 1 – Dec 31
NEW YORK	NR1 (Status Quo)	All	16.5"	3	June 23 – Aug 31
				6	Sept 1 – Dec 31
	NR2	All	16"	3	May 16 – Aug 31
				6	Sept 1 – Dec 31

Table 2. Estimated median harvest in pounds for status quo in the northern region and Option NR2, as well as the resulting median percent liberalization for the northern region.

Region	Option	Mode	Size Limit	Possession Limit	Open Season	RDM Estimated Median Harvest (Pounds)	Percent Liberalization in Harvest
NORTHERN REGION	NR1 (Status Quo)	<i>See Table 1.</i>				2,257,896	0%
	NR2	<i>See Table 1.</i>				2,819,484	26.92%

Table 3. Status quo and proposed black sea bass management measure options for New Jersey, with each option’s estimated median harvest in pounds and percent liberalization in harvest (continued on next page).

State	Option	Mode	Size Limit	Possession Limit	Open Season	RDM Estimated Median Harvest (Pounds)	Percent Liberalization in Harvest
NEW JERSEY	NJ1 (Status Quo)	All	12.5"	10	May 17 – Jun 19	2,453,967	0%
				1	July 1 – Aug 31		
				10	Oct 1 – Oct 31		
				15	Nov 1 – Dec 31		
	NJ2	All	12.5"	10	May 15 – June 21	2,850,920	17.6%
				1	June 22 – Sept 20		
				10	Sept 21 – Oct 31		
				15	Nov 1 – Dec 31		
	NJ3	All	12.5"	10	May 15 – June 21	2,790,868	16.54%
				2	July 1 – Sept 15		
10				Oct 1 – Oct 31			
15				Nov 1 – Dec 31			
NJ4	All	12.5"	10	May 15 – June 21	2,832,469	16.91%	
			1	June 22 – Sept 15			
			10	Sept 16 – Oct 21			
			15	Nov 1 – Dec 31			
NJ5	All	12.5"	10	May 15 – June 21	2,840,496	17.79%	
			2	June 22 – Sept 7			
			10	Oct 1 – Oct 31			
			15	Nov 1 – Dec 31			
NJ6	All	12.5"	10	May 15 – June 21	2,816,631	16.27%	
			1	June 22 – Sept 22			
			10	Sept 23 – Oct 31			
			15	Nov 1 – Dec 31			
NJ7	All	12.5"	10	May 17 – June 30	2,823,207	17.35%	
			1	July 1 – Aug 31			
			10	Sept 25 – Oct 31			
			15	Nov 1 – Dec 31			
NJ8	All	12.5"	10	May 17 – June 30	2,811,030	16.86%	
			1	July 1 – Aug 31			
			10	Sept 26 – Oct 31			
			15	Nov 1 – Dec 31			
NJ9	All	12.5"	10	May 17 – June 30	2,793,408	16.34%	
			1	July 1 – Aug 31			
			10	Sept 27 – Oct 31			
			15	Nov 1 – Dec 31			
NJ10	All	12.5"	10	May 15 – June 21	2,782,041	16.09%	
			2	July 1 – Sept 14			

State	Option	Mode	Size Limit	Possession Limit	Open Season	RDM Estimated Median Harvest (Pounds)	Percent Liberalization in Harvest
	NJ11	All	12.5"	10	Oct 1 – Oct 31	2,814,720	16.65%
				15	Nov 1 – Dec 31		
				10	May 15 – June 21		
				2	June 22 – Sept 4		
				10	Oct 1 – Oct 31		
				15	Nov 1 – Dec 31		

Table 4. Status quo and the proposed black sea bass management measures for two southern region options, SR2 and SR3. Each option’s estimated median harvest in pounds and percent liberalization in harvest is also provided.

Region	Option	Mode	Size Limit	Possession Limit	Open Season	RDM Estimated Median Harvest (Pounds)	Percent Liberalization in Harvest
SOUTHERN REGION	SR1 (Status Quo)	All	13"	15	<i>Delaware & Maryland: May 15 - Sept 30; Oct 10 - Dec 31</i>	926,094	0%
					<i>Virginia: May 15 - July 15; July 27 - Dec 31</i>		
					<i>North Carolina: May 15 - Sept 30; Oct 10 - Dec 31</i>		
	SR2	All	12.5"	15	May 1 – Dec 31	1,072,631	15.62%
	SR3	All	<i>Delaware & Maryland: 12.5"</i>	15	<i>Delaware & Maryland: May 1 – Dec 31</i>	1,063,447	13.25%
<i>Virginia & North Carolina: 13"</i>			<i>Virginia & North Carolina: April 1 – Dec 31</i>				

Table 5. Coastwide median estimated harvest in pounds and the coastwide percent liberalization for each combination of options submitted by the three regions (Tables 1, 3, and 4). The percent liberalization has been rounded to the nearest whole number. Combinations above a coastwide percent liberalization of 20% are highlighted in red.

Combination ID	Proposed Regional Options			Coastwide Median Estimated Harvest (Pounds)	Coastwide Percent Liberalization
	Northern Region	New Jersey	Southern Region		
A	NR2	NJ2	SR2	7,001,225	21%
B	NR2	NJ2	SR3	6,972,609	20%
C	NR2	NJ3	SR2	6,961,238	20%
D	NR2	NJ3	SR3	6,923,682	19%
E	NR2	NJ4	SR2	6,992,480	20%
F	NR2	NJ4	SR3	6,941,998	20%
G	NR2	NJ5	SR2	7,004,494	21%
H	NR2	NJ5	SR3	6,975,878	20%
I	NR2	NJ6	SR2	6,973,534	20%
J	NR2	NJ6	SR3	6,944,918	20%
K	NR2	NJ7	SR2	7,012,754	20%
L	NR2	NJ7	SR3	6,984,138	20%
M	NR	NJ8	SR2	6,996,329	20%
N	NR	NJ8	SR3	6,967,713	20%
O	NR	NJ9	SR2	6,978,177	20%
P	NR	NJ9	SR3	6,949,561	20%
Q	NR	NJ10	SR2	6,959,332	20%
R	NR	NJ10	SR3	6,914,862	19%
S	NR	NJ11	SR2	6,990,576	20%
T	NR	NJ11	SR3	6,958,937	20%

Appendix 1.

Table 6. 2025 recreational management measures for black sea bass.

	STATE	Size Limit	Possession Limit	Open Season
Northern Region	MASSACHUSETTS	16.5"	4 fish	May 17-September 1
	RHODE ISLAND Private & Shore	16.5"	2 fish	May 22-August 26
			3 fish	August 27-December 31
	RI For-Hire	16"	2 fish	June 18-August 31
			6 fish	September 1-December 31
	CONNECTICUT Private & Shore	16"	5 fish	May 17-June 23; July 8-November 25
	CT (Authorized For- Hire Monitoring Program vessels)		5 fish	May 17-August 31
			7 fish	September 1-December 31
NEW YORK	16.5"	3 fish	June 23-August 31	
		6 fish	September 1-December 31	
	NEW JERSEY	12.5"	10 fish	May 17-June 19
			1 fish	July 1-August 31
			10 fish	October 1-October 31
			15 fish	November 1-December 31
Southern Region	DELAWARE	13"	15 fish	May 15-September 30; October 10-December 31
	MARYLAND			May 15-September 30; October 10-December 31
	VIRGINIA			May 15-July 15; August 5-December 31
	NORTH CAROLINA - North of Cape Hatteras (N of 35° 15'N)			May 15-September 30; October 10-December 31

Table 7. 2026 and 2027 recreational management measures for summer flounder (status quo from 2025).

STATE	Mode	Size Limit	Possession Limit	Open Season
MASSACHUSETTS	Private & For-Hire	17.5"	5 fish	May 24 – September 23
	Shore	16.5"		
RHODE ISLAND	All	19"	6 fish	April 1 – December 31
Rhode Island Shore Program (7 designated shore sites)	Shore	19"	4 fish ¹	
		17"	2 fish ¹	
CONNECTICUT	All	19"	3 fish	May 4 – August 1
		19.5"		August 2 – October 15
Connecticut Enhanced Opportunity Shore Fishing Sites (45 designated shore sites)	Shore	17"	3 fish	May 4 – October 15
NEW YORK	All	19"	3 fish	May 4 – August 1
		19.5"		August 2 – October 15
NEW JERSEY	All	18"	3 fish	May 4 – September 25
New Jersey Shore Program Site (IBSP)	Shore	16"	2 fish	
New Jersey Delaware Bay and Tributaries	All	17"	3 fish	
DELAWARE, MARYLAND, & VIRGINIA	All	16"	4 fish	January 1 – May 31
		17.5"		June 1 – December 31
NORTH CAROLINA	All	15"	1 fish	August 16 – September 30 ²

¹ Combined possession limit of 6 fish; no more than 2 fish at 17-inch minimum size limit.

² Season subject to become more restrictive pending southern flounder management needs.

Table 8. 2026 and 2027 recreational management measures for scup (status quo from 2025).

STATE	Mode	Size Limit	Possession Limit	Open Season
MASSACHUSETTS	Shore	9.5"	30 fish	May 1 – December 31
	Private	11"		
	For-Hire	11"	40 fish	May 1 – June 30
			30 fish	July 1 – December 31
RHODE ISLAND	Shore	9.5"	30 fish	May 1 – December 31
	Private	11"		
	For-Hire	11"	30 fish	May 1 – August 31
			40 fish	September 1 – October 31
			30 fish	November 1 – October 31
CONNECTICUT	Shore	9.5"	30 fish	May 1 – December 31
	Private	11"		
	For-Hire	11"	30 fish	May 1 – August 31
			40 fish	September 1 – October 31
			30 fish	November 1 – December 31
NEW YORK	Shore	9.5"	30 fish	May 1 – December 31
	Private	11"		
	For-Hire	11"	30 fish	May 1 – August 31
			40 fish	September 1 – October 31
			30 fish	November 1 – December 31
NEW JERSEY	All	10"	30 fish	January 1 – June 30
				September 1 – December 31
DELAWARE, MARYLAND, VIRGINIA, & NORTH CAROLINA (North of Cape Hatteras, N of 35° 15'N)	All	9"	30 fish	January 1 – December 31



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FISH & WILDLIFE

MARINE RESOURCES ADMINISTRATION

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Acting Commissioner

Memorandum

TO: Tracey Bauer, FMP Coordinator
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

FROM: Peter Clarke, Fisheries Biologist
New Jersey Bureau of Marine Fisheries

DATE: February 27, 2026

SUBJECT: New Jersey 2026 Black Sea Bass Recreational Fishery Management Request

Background:

At the February 2026 meeting of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) Black Sea Bass Management Board, a coastwide recreational harvest liberalization of 20 percent was approved and allocated among three regions:

- Northern Region (Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York) – up to a 27% liberalization.
- Southern Region (Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina) – up to a 16.5% liberalization.
- New Jersey – Remainder of the coastwide liberalization.

The allocation methodology results in an ambiguous percentage for New Jersey unless calculated in combination with the approved Northern and Southern regional liberalizations. New Jersey submitted 10 management options for the 2026–2027 recreational fishery. Each option was evaluated in combination with each Northern and Southern regional liberalization scenarios, producing twenty total coastwide percent liberalization results.

Of these twenty projected outcomes:

- Two NJ options exceeded the coastwide liberalization target of 20%: NJ option NJ2 (Coastwide Combination A in Table 1 below) at 20.66% and NJ option NJ5 (Coastwide Combination G in Table 1 below) at 20.51%
- Both options remained compliant under one coastwide calculation scenario (Combinations B and H respectively in Table 1).
- Under the alternative scenario option, projections were only slightly above the target.

New Jersey respectfully requests that the Board consider approval of these two options, as they fall within a narrow margin of the overall coastwide target and demonstrate practical compliance under one approved modeling framework.

Justification:

The coastwide Marine Recreational Information Program (MRIP) harvest estimates used in the Recreation Demand Model (RDM) include landings south of Cape Hatteras. MRIP harvest of black sea bass south of Cape Hatteras has varied between 196,052 and 326,339 pounds between 2022-2024, averaging approximately 219,000 pounds. This indicates the RDM could be overestimating coastwide harvest by up to 4%.

New Jersey believes approving these two options—along with the additional eight NJ options—supports conservation goals while ensuring fair access to the resource for recreational stakeholders because (1) the projected overages for the options are small compared to the approximate 7-million-pound coastwide RHL target, (2) the RDM calculations may be overestimating harvest due to the inclusion of landings south of Cape Hatteras, and (3) the options meet the requirements under one approved coastwide scenario (though not the second).

Table 1. Coastwide median estimated harvest in pounds and the coastwide percent liberalization for each combination of options submitted by the three regions. The two combinations with Options NJ2 and NJ5 that exceed the coastwide percent liberalization are highlighted in yellow. All options outside of Combination A and G have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Combination ID	Proposed Regional Options			Coastwide Median Estimated Harvest (Pounds)	Coastwide Percent Liberalization
	Northern Region	New Jersey	Southern Region		
A	NR2	NJ2	SR2	7,001,225	20.66%
B	NR2	NJ2	SR3	6,972,609	20%
C	NR2	NJ3	SR2	6,961,238	20%
D	NR2	NJ3	SR3	6,923,682	19%
E	NR2	NJ4	SR2	6,992,480	20%
F	NR2	NJ4	SR3	6,941,998	20%
G	NR2	NJ5	SR2	7,004,494	20.51%
H	NR2	NJ5	SR3	6,975,878	20%
I	NR2	NJ6	SR2	6,973,534	20%
J	NR2	NJ6	SR3	6,944,918	20%
K	NR2	NJ7	SR2	7,012,754	20%
L	NR2	NJ7	SR3	6,984,138	20%
M	NR	NJ8	SR2	6,996,329	20%
N	NR	NJ8	SR3	6,967,713	20%
O	NR	NJ9	SR2	6,978,177	20%
P	NR	NJ9	SR3	6,949,561	20%
Q	NR	NJ10	SR2	6,959,332	20%
R	NR	NJ10	SR3	6,914,862	19%
S	NR	NJ11	SR2	6,990,576	20%
T	NR	NJ11	SR3	6,958,937	20%





[New] [External] BlkSeabass Letter

From Capt. Mike <Capt.Mike@flyingconnie.com>

Date Wed 2/18/2026 10:38 AM

To Tracey Bauer <TBauer@ASMFC.org>

 1 attachment (279 KB)

CCPBA SEABASS Letter 2026.pdf;

Good Morning Tracey Bauer
ASMFC
FMP Coordinator
Black SeaBass

We recently prepared the attached letter to our CT Managers and respectfully request that it be included in the supplemental materials for the upcoming March meeting.

Please feel free to reach out with any thoughts, questions, or recommendations. We appreciate your consideration and look forward to your feedback.

Kind regards,
CCPBA

Captain Mike Pirri

FlyingConnie Charters LLC.

Cell: [203-515-1444](tel:203-515-1444)

Web: www.FlyingConnie.com

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President Capt. Marc Berger, Vice-Pres. Capt. Seth Megargle, Treasure Capt. TJ Karbowski, Secretary Capt. Mike Pirri

Dear:

Connecticut DEEP. Bureau Chief Dr. Justin Davis

Connecticut DEEP. Assistant Marine fisheries Director Matt Gates

February 9, 2026

The Connecticut Charter and Party Boat Association has serious concerns regarding the example used by the ASMFC in the Black Sea Bass supplemental materials, which illustrated Connecticut receiving only 11% of the 27% liberalization allocated to the Northern Region.

Connecticut Charter and Party boats primarily rely on only two species that satisfy our customers: striped bass (currently under rebuilding) and black sea bass (currently at nearly three times the target biomass). Years of regulatory reductions have caused deep angler dissatisfaction and have already resulted in the loss of two long-standing for-hire businesses just last year—Bluefin Charters and Priority One Charters.

After more than ten years without any liberalization, the ASMFC finally approved a 20% recreational liberalization for all three regions. Our association has attended dozens of meetings, submitted extensive written comments, and has members serving on the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Advisory Panel to help achieve this outcome. As business owners, full access to this liberalization 27% is critical to remaining viable.

However, the discussion of Addendum 32, Section 3.2.1—stating that “in the event of liberalization, measures will be set to reduce intraregional disparities”—has raised serious concern. Connecticut has gone more than a decade without liberalization. **Nothing in the addendum requires that all intraregional disparities be fully resolved in a single regulatory cycle.**

Connecticut is hurting just as much as, if not more than, other Northern Region states, particularly because much of our harvest occurs in state waters with limited offshore access. We also have far fewer species available to our fleet. Other Northern Region states benefit from substantially more liberal summer flounder regulations and significantly more tautog opportunity, including longer seasons and higher bag limits. **If intraregional disparities are truly the goal, those differences must also be addressed.**

The ASMFC supplemental document initially showed Connecticut receiving only an 11% liberalization, while New York received approximately 57%. This outcome is unjust and inequitable. It conditions other states to believe Connecticut will accept the smallest liberalization on the entire East Coast, while every other Northern Region state receives at least double that amount. While the Northern Region’s



President Capt. Marc Berger, Vice-Pres. Capt. Seth Megargle, Treasure Capt. TJ Karbowski, Secretary Capt. Mike Pirri

allowable liberalization was later increased to approximately 27%, Connecticut cannot allow this opportunity to pass while using only 11% of what is now available.

We respectfully request that all Northern Region states be formally notified that:

- 1)The supplemental materials were illustrative examples only, and
- 2)Connecticut clearly intends to utilize nearly its full available liberalization, of 27%.

The clear priority for the Northern Region should be reducing minimum size to convert discards into landings and family dinners. If Addendum 32, Section 3.2.1 is to guide implementation, **no state should be permitted to extend seasons before reducing minimum size to meet the region's minimum length objective.**

When negotiating with other states, we ask that you picture a public hearing in Connecticut—standing in front of a room full of angry fishermen who have waited 12 years for meaningful black sea bass relief. Now imagine explaining that Connecticut is going to be “nice” and voluntarily give that long-overdue opportunity to New York and Massachusetts instead.

We also have serious concerns regarding reliance on the RDM model. The RDM projects Connecticut harvest at 494,000 pounds and New York at 992,000 pounds, with New York receiving a 57% liberalization. However, MRIP data averaged over eleven years shows New York harvesting approximately 1.42 million fish under stricter regulations. Using a conservative conversion of two pounds per fish, that equates to 2.84 million pounds—nearly three times the RDM estimate, even before liberalization.

This discrepancy creates a real risk that New York could exceed the regional and coastwide ABC, triggering a whiplash reduction through the percent-change approach. If that occurs, where does that leave Connecticut's black sea bass regulations after finally rebuilding participation?

Connecticut should not be penalized for finally restoring opportunity after a decade of restraint. We must be allowed to fully and fairly participate in this liberalization, with size reduction as the primary tool to reduce waste, increase angler satisfaction, rebuild the recreational fleet, and sustain for-hire businesses.

Respectfully submitted by,

Marc Berger, Seth Megargle, TJ Karbowski and Michael Pirri

The Officers of the Connecticut Charter and Partyboat Association

Jersey Coast Anglers Association

Working for Marine Recreational Anglers

PO Box 1191, Wall Branch Post Office, Wall, NJ 07719

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



2/24/26

ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Board,

The Jersey Coast Anglers Association appreciates this opportunity to comment to the board. JCAA represents thousands of fishermen who fish in New Jersey. Regarding **fluke**, many of our members are infuriated that we received a 38% increase in our quota but were not allowed to liberalize at all. We know that is due to the Recreation Demand Model. However, the fact that commercial fishermen received a 45% increase in their quota while we were not allowed to liberalize at all does not sit well at all with us. Something is very wrong here.

Regarding **sea bass**, we understand why the states to our north were given approval to liberalize by 27%. After all, they have a very large size limit, and we all want to cut down on dead discards. The southern states are going to be allowed to liberalize by up to 16.5%. New Jersey gets whatever is left over, approximately 15-17%. The northern states do have the strictest regulations. However, the southern states have the most liberal. Those states have a 15 fish bag limit for much of the year, while NJ is allowed either no fish or just one from mid-June through September. We don't know how the numbers will work out, but NJ should receive at the very least, the same 16.5% liberalization that the southern states are receiving. Anything less is unacceptable.

Lastly, the angler satisfaction chart that shows NJ anglers being much more satisfied with status quo regulations, than those in other states is even less accurate than the MRIP data. Bringing home one seabass for dinner does not cut it.

Sincerely,

Paul Haertel
JCAA Fluke and Sea Bass Committee Chairman
anglerpmh@aol.com



[New] [External] Black Sea Bass Regulations

From Robert J Scully Jr <bob@avalonsales.com>

Date Tue 2/17/2026 12:03 PM

To Tracey Bauer <TBauer@ASMFC.org>

Cc info@thefisherman.com <info@thefisherman.com>

BACK SEA BASS SUGGESTION

Run Name		SEASON 1	SEASON 2	SEASON 3	SEASON 4	Total Extra Days Open
NJ Current Regulations	Date	5/17-6/19	7/1-8/31	10/1-10/31	11/1-12/31	
	Bag	10	1	10	15	
1.A	Date	5/15-6/21	6/22-9/17	9/18-10/31	11/1-12/31	43
	Bag	10	1	10	15	
2.A	Date	5/15-6/21	7/1-9/15	10/1-10/31	11/1-12/31	19
	Bag	10	2	10	15	
2.B	Date	5/15-6/21	6/22-9/6	10/1-10/31	11/1-12/31	19
	Bag	10	2	10	15	

When looking at the chart, it becomes obvious that “Season 2” does not exist for trying to catch Black Sea Bass. It is just a bypass catch Season.

My suggestion is to:

- Leave the dates as they are.

- Reduce the limit for “Season 4” to 10, which is more than enough the rest of the year. Have you ever gone out with 3 guys and caught 45 to 60 black sea bass? Why? Nobody needs to catch 15 of anything!

- Let’s make “Season 2” a fishing season!

- Increase the limit to 5 in “Season 2”.

- If in order to open “Season 2” to more fishing, you must reduce the number of days to fish, I would reduce “Season 2” days. Having a 1 or 2 limit, is not a “Season” for fishing.

- If you have to, limit the number of black sea bass to 4 in “Season 2”.

In other words, I am suggesting making Season 2 a time to fish for black sea bass. Not just for fisherman/woman, but also for our children, who are in school almost all the other Black Sea Bass Seasons! Our children are our future. Let them enjoy fishing for Black sea Bass, so they too want to protect them.

Regardless of what you decide, please show respect and restraint by limiting Season 4 to 10 fish. There is no legitimate reason to keep more than 10 fish. Show our children that we do have common sense and are concerned about maintaining a healthy stock of Black Sea Bass year-round.

Thank you for your efforts.

Bob Scully
609-408-1000-C

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[New] [External] NJ Sea Bass Comments

From Tony Butch <tbutch88@gmail.com>

Date Mon 2/16/2026 3:07 PM

To Tracey Bauer <TBauer@ASMFC.org>

Good afternoon,

I am emailing to provide my comments in regard to the increase and harvest of our sea bass fishery here in New Jersey.

Option 2A would be my first preference, 2B would be my second.

Reinstating the 2-fish summer bag limit is an opportunity to give anglers back what was taken in the last round of cuts, and then some. Not only would it restore the limit, it would effectively add nearly 3 additional weeks of fishing opportunity for sea bass.

Summer is when the greatest number of anglers are on the water, families, weekend fishermen, charter customers, and private boaters alike. Bringing back the 2-fish limit during this peak period would allow more people than any other season to benefit from an increased bag limit.

This isn't just about adding fish, it's about restoring opportunity, maximizing access when demand is at its highest, and putting real value back into the hands of the angling community.

Thank you,

Tony

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Run Name		SEASON 1	SEASON 2	SEASON 3	SEASON 4	Total Extra Days Open
NJ Current Regulations	Date	5/17-6/19	7/1-8/31	10/1-10/31	11/1-12/31	
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	Bag	10	1	10	15	
2.A	Date	5/15-6/21	7/1-9/15	10/1-10/31	11/1-12/31	19
	Bag	10	2	10	15	
2.B	Date	5/15-6/21	6/22-9/6	10/1-10/31	11/1-12/31	19
	Bag	10	2	10	15	



[New] [External] Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board Public Comments

From Sean Layton <seanrlayton@gmail.com>

Date Wed 2/18/2026 3:12 PM

To Tracey Bauer <TBauer@ASMFC.org>

Mr. Bauer,

I am a recreational angler from Atlantic Highlands, NJ, and an avid fisherman for Fluke, Sea Bass, and Porgies. I am writing to provide public comment on the recent allocation of the Black Sea Bass harvest increase.

While I understand that regulations are set at the state level, I am very disappointed that New Jersey will receive such a small portion of the coastwide increase for Black Sea Bass. There is no data supporting the decision to limit any state below the allowed 20% increase. All states within the ASMFC have been strong partners and compliant with conservation measures over many years, helping rebuild the stock to more than 200% above its target. With the stock now well above its biomass target, it is reasonable that the benefits of this recovery be distributed in a balanced and transparent manner, rather than allowing interstate politics to prevent all anglers in the region from realizing those benefits equally.

I urge the committee to consider a one-time exception and allow New Jersey the full 20% increase before regulations are finalized, given how far current stock assessments exceed projected targets. Additionally, I encourage the committee to adopt a more measured and equitable approach in the future—especially with upcoming Fluke and Porgy discussions—so that quota-setting does not disadvantage any single state.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued stewardship of our fisheries.

Sean Layton
732.300.7271
Atlantic Highlands, NJ

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[New] [External] Summer Flounder, Scup & Black Sea Bass

From Planning Department <cnplanners@coltsneck.org>

Date Thu 2/19/2026 6:26 PM

To Tracey Bauer <TBauer@ASMFC.org>

Mr. Bauer,

New Jersey has the highest level of Black Sea Bass participation among the Mid Atlantic States. Therefore, instead of a 27% increase allowance in Black Sea Bass to New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New Hampshire and a 16% increase allocation to Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina please consider a flat liberalization of 20% across the board to all states.

Thank you,

Timothy Anfuso

50 Society Hill Way

Tinton Falls, NJ 07724

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