



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Board Meeting Summary

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass
Management Board
March 5, 2026

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Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

SUMMER FLOUNDER SCUP AND BLACK SEA BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (MARCH 5, 2026)	2
<i>Meeting Summary</i>	2
<i>Motions</i>	4

SUMMER FLOUNDER SCUP AND BLACK SEA BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (MARCH 5, 2026)

Meeting Summary

2026-2027 Black Sea Bass Recreational Measures

On March 5, 2026, the Board reviewed and approved a range of combinations of regional options for 2026 and 2027 black sea bass recreational measures, which are estimated to achieve a coastwide liberalization of less than or equal to 20%, as developed by the recreation demand model (RDM). Following the March Board meeting, it was discovered one combination of regional options had been overlooked and had not been included in the approved motion. The Board approved this additional combination of regional options via email vote.

Background

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 XXXI](#) 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, 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 then develop recreational measures that achieve the coastwide recreational harvest target.

In February, the Board set the regional distribution of the coastwide 20% liberalization in harvest, as follows: a 16.5% liberalization for the southern region will be allowed a; no more than a 27% liberalization for the northern region shall not exceed a; and New Jersey received the remaining liberalization.

Next Steps

The northern states will promulgate their measures while New Jersey and the southern states will select their final measures for implementation. The Board also tasked the TC with discussing an issue identified at the December 2025 joint Board/Council meeting, involving evaluating the selection of confidence intervals surrounding estimated harvest from the RDM for black sea bass, compared to summer flounder and scup. More information on the Board and Council's previous discussion on this issue can be found in [the December 2025 joint Board/Council meeting summary](#), beginning on page 4.

For more information, please contact Tracey Bauer, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at tbauer@asmfc.org.

Table 1. 2026-2027 Black sea bass recreational management measure options approved by the Board for each state. Note that 7 New Jersey options were approved, but 2 (NJ3 and NJ7) can only be implemented if the southern region 3 option is also selected.

Option	State	Mode	Size Limit	Possession Limit	Open Season
Northern Region 2	MA	All	16"	4	May 16 – Aug 31
				2	Sept 1 – Oct 14
	RI	Private/ Shore	16"	3	May 16 – Dec 31
		For-Hire		4	May 16 – Aug 31
				6	Sept 1 – Dec 31
	CT	Private/ Shore	15.5"	4	May 16 – Nov 25
		For-Hire		4	May 16 – Aug 31
				6	Sept 1 – Dec 31
	NY	All	16"	3	May 16 – Aug 31
				6	Sept 1 – Dec 31
NJ3*	NEW JERSEY	All	12.5"	10	May 15 – June 21
2				July 1 – Sept 15	
10				Oct 1 – Oct 31	
15				Nov 1 – Dec 31	
NJ6		All	12.5"	10	May 15 – June 21
				1	June 22 – Sept 22
				10	Sept 23 – Oct 31
NJ7*		All	12.5"	15	Nov 1 – Dec 31
				10	May 17 – June 30
				1	July 1 – Aug 31
				10	Sept 25 – Oct 31
NJ8		All	12.5"	15	Nov 1 – Dec 31
				10	May 17 – June 30
				1	July 1 – Aug 31
NJ9		All	12.5"	10	Sept 26 – Oct 31
				15	Nov 1 – Dec 31
	10			May 17 – June 30	
	1			July 1 – Aug 31	
NJ10	All	12.5"	10	Sept 27 – Oct 31	
			15	Nov 1 – Dec 31	
			10	May 15 – June 21	
			2	July 1 – Sept 14	
NJ11	All	12.5"	10	Oct 1 – Oct 31	
			15	Nov 1 – Dec 31	
			10	May 15 – June 21	
			2	June 22 – Sept 4	

Option	State	Mode	Size Limit	Possession Limit	Open Season
Southern Region 2	DE, MD, VA, & NC	All	12.5"	15	May 1 – Dec 31
Southern Region 3		All	<i>Delaware & Maryland: 12.5"</i>	15	<i>Delaware & Maryland: May 1 – Dec 31</i>
			<i>Virginia & North Carolina: 13"</i>		<i>Virginia & North Carolina: April 1 – Dec 31</i>

*Option can only be selected if the southern region 3 option is also selected.

Motions

Main Motion

Move to approve regional option combinations D, I, J, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, and T, as identified in Table 5 of the staff memo.

Motion made by Ms. Meserve and seconded by seconded by Dr. McNamee.

Motion to Substitute

Move to substitute to approve all regional options except A and G.

Motion made by Mr. Nowalsky and seconded by Mr. Sikorski. Motion fails for lack of a majority (Roll Call: In favor - MD, NH, NY, NJ, DE; Opposed - RI, VA, MA, NC, CT; Abstentions - NOAA).

Main motion

Move to approve regional option combinations D, I, J, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, and T, as identified in Table 5 of the staff memo.

Motion made by Ms. Meserve and seconded by Dr. McNamee. Motion passes (Roll Call: In favor - RI, NH, VA, MA, NC, NY, CT; Opposed - MD, NJ, DE; Abstentions - NOAA).

Email Vote

Move to approve regional option combination S as identified in table 5 of the staff memo.

Motion made by Ms. Meserve and seconded by Dr. McNamee. Motion passes (Roll Call: In favor – NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, DE, MD, PRFC, VA, NC; Abstentions - NOAA)