



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Meeting Summary for MAFMC & ASMFC Boards for Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass, and Bluefish

Sustainable and Cooperative Management of Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

MAFMC & ASMFC Management Boards for Summer
Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management
Board, and Bluefish
August 12, 2026

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Meeting Summaries, Press Releases and Motions

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The Atlantic State Marine Fisheries Commission's (Commission) Management Boards for Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass and Bluefish met jointly with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) August 12, 2026 in Philadelphia, PA to take action and discuss a number of issues. The summaries of those meetings follow.

Presentations, briefing materials, motions, and webinar recordings are available at <https://www.mafmc.org/briefing/august-2026>.

SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP, AND BLACK SEA BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD & MID-ATLANTIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL (AUGUST 12, 2026)

Press Release

ASMFC Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board Initiates Addendum to Consider Commercial Scup Quota Overages and Payback Provision

Philadelphia, PA – The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board initiated an addendum to consider an option that allows for quota period overages (without paybacks) in years where the annual commercial scup quota is not exceeded. This change is intended to preserve the long-term sustainability of the scup stock while still allowing the full quota to be harvested each year.

This action seeks to provide complementary action to the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's Commercial Scup Winter I Framework Adjustment, which was approved for final action at the Council's August meeting.

The Board will consider approval of the draft addendum for public comment at the Commission's Annual Meeting in November.

For more information, please contact Chelsea Tuohy, FMP Coordinator, at ctuohy@asmfc.org.

Meeting Summary

The Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board (Board) met jointly with the Council to review previously adopted 2027 specifications and commercial measures for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass, and consider action to modify the scup commercial trip limit requirements.

2027 Specifications

After considering the recommendations of the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC), Advisory Panels, and Monitoring Committees, the Board and Council agreed that no changes are needed to the 2027 specifications for summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass. The 2027 commercial quotas and recreational harvest limits (RHLs) for all three species are shown in the table below.

Species	Commercial Quota <i>millions of pounds</i>		Recreational Harvest Limit <i>millions of pounds</i>	
	2026	2027	2026	2027
Summer Flounder	12.78	12.78	8.79	8.79
Scup	17.70	15.57	13.17	11.58
Black Sea Bass	7.83	7.83	8.14	8.14

The recreational bag, size, and season limits for the three species will be reviewed at the joint Board and Council meeting in December 2026.

In reviewing the 2027 scup specifications, the Board and Council discussed potential changes to commercial measures during the Winter I quota period (January-April), including implementing a tiered trip limit structure as opposed to the 1,000-pound reduced trip limit. National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) staff advised that changing these measures could complicate the rulemaking process for the Scup Winter I Framework (see following section). Because the Council has prioritized an expedited timeline for the framework to ensure that any approved regulatory changes can be implemented by the start of the 2027 Winter I fishery, the Board and Council agreed to maintain the existing measures for 2027. Further, trip limit discussions will be deferred until the next specifications cycle, allowing staff time to evaluate alternative scenarios and gather additional stakeholder input.

MAFMC Scup Winter I Framework & ASMFC Draft Addendum

The Council took final action on its Commercial Scup Winter I Framework Adjustment, which modifies the commercial scup Winter I trip limit requirements and landings-based accountability measures. This action aims to increase management flexibility during the Winter I quota period and preserve harvest opportunities across all three quota periods (Winter I, Summer, and Winter II), when practicable.

Under current specifications, the Winter I trip limit starts at 50,000 pounds and is reduced to 1,000 pounds once 80 percent of the Winter I quota is landed. Any landings overages within a quota period must be deducted from the corresponding quota period in the following year.

In recent years (2023-2026), delays in the availability of in-season landings data, combined with limited flexibility under the existing regulations, have made it difficult for NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) to implement the Winter I trip limit reduction in a timely manner. In 2026, unusually rapid landings, combined with these data and management challenges, resulted in a 23 percent overage of the Winter I quota and an early fishery closure. Under the existing accountability measures, this overage must be deducted from the 2027 Winter I quota. Fishery participants have raised concerns that, if the 2026 annual quota is not exceeded, repayment of the overage would impose an unnecessary economic burden on the commercial industry without providing a meaningful conservation benefit to the scup stock.

To address these challenges, the Framework allows the Winter I trip limit reduction to be implemented based on projected commercial scup landings, rather than requiring NMFS to wait for actual landings data. It would also provide the GARFO Administrator with discretionary authority to not implement the reduction if it is expected to prevent full harvest of the Winter I quota. Together, these changes are expected to give NMFS greater flexibility to implement trip limit reductions in a timely manner when needed, while avoiding unnecessary reductions when the risk of exceeding the Winter I quota is low.

The Framework also allows the NMFS RA to waive the repayment requirements for quota period overages if the annual commercial scup quota was not exceeded in the same year. This provision is intended to preserve harvest opportunities across all quota periods while still constraining harvest to the annual quota. The Council will submit the Framework to GARFO for review and implementation, which is expected to be completed by January 2027. Additional information about this action is available on the Council [action page](#).

To complement the Council's action, the Board initiated an addendum to consider revisions to the commercial period payback provision to forgive period overage paybacks in years where the annual quota is not exceeded (see above press release). The Commission will issue a press release when the document is available for public comment. For more information, please contact Chelsea Tuohy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at ctuohy@asmfc.org.

ASMFC SUMMER FLOUNDER, SCUP, AND BLACK SEA BASS MANAGEMENT BOARD (AUGUST 12, 2026)

Meeting Summary

Under Board only action, the Board reviewed and approved Fishery Management Plan (FMP) Reviews for the 2025 fishing year and state compliance reports for summer flounder, scup and black sea bass. *De minimis* requests were approved for Delaware for summer flounder and scup. Finally, the Board elected Shanna Madsen from Connecticut as Vice Chair. For more information, please contact Chelsea Tuohy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at ctuohy@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to increase the commercial scup Winter I possession limit after 80% of the quota is reached from 1,000 pounds to 5,000 pounds for 2027.

Board: Motion made by Mr. Maniscalco and seconded by Ms. Meserve.

Council: Motion made by Mr. Gilmore and seconded by Ms. Davidson (3 in favor, 10 oppose, 3 abstentions).

Motion fails for lack of Council majority.

Council Only Motions

Move to approve Alternatives 1B and 1C as the preferred alternatives for Alternative Set 1.

Motion made by Ms. Beckwith and seconded by Mr. Luisi. Motion carries by consent.

Main Motion

Move to approve Alternative 2B, with a threshold of 10,000 pounds, and sub-alternative 2B-1 as the as the preferred alternatives for Alternative Set 2.

Motion made by Mr. Ruhle and seconded by Ms. Nolan. Motion amended.

Amended Motion

Move to amend to approve Alternative 2B, with a threshold of 20,000 pounds, and sub-alternative 2B-1 as the as the preferred alternatives for Alternative Set 2.

Motion made by Mr. Pentony and seconded by Mr. Gilmore. Motion carries by consent.

Main Motion as Amended

Move to approve Alternative 2B, with a threshold of 20,000 pounds, and sub-alternative 2B-1 as the as the preferred alternatives for Alternative Set 2.

Motion fails (2 in favor, 13 opposed, 1 abstention).

Move to approve Alternative 2A as the preferred alternative for Alternative Set 2.

Motion made by Ms. Beckwith and seconded by Mr. Grist. Motion carries by consent, with one abstention from NMFS.

Move to approve Alternative 3B as the preferred alternative for Alternative Set 3.

Motion made by Mr. Ruhle and seconded by Ms. Beckwith. Motion carries by consent.

Move to submit the Commercial Scup Winter I Framework Adjustment with preferred alternatives as identified today to NMFS.

Motion made by Mr. Ruhle and seconded by Mr. Gilmore. Motion carries by consent, with one abstention from NMFS.

ASMFC Board Only Motions

Move to initiate and addendum to consider modifying commercial scup accountability measures where quota period overages are forgiven in years where the annual quota is not exceeded.

Motion made by Mr. Hasbrouck and seconded by Ms. Madsen. Motion passes without objection.

Move to approve the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan Reviews for the 2025 fishing year, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* requests from Delaware for summer flounder and scup.

Motion made by Ms. Meserve and seconded by Mr. Nowalsky. Motion passes without objection.

Move to elect Shanna Madsen as Vice Chair of the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board.

Motion by Mr. Cimino and seconded by Mr. Grist. Motion passes without objection.

ASMFC BLUEFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD & MAFMC (AUGUST 12, 2026)

Meeting Summary

The Bluefish Management Board (Board) met jointly with the Council to review previously adopted 2027 specifications and recreational measures for bluefish. After considering the recommendations of the SSC, Advisory Panels, and Monitoring Committees, the Board and Council agreed that no changes are needed to the 2027 specifications. The 2027 commercial quotas and RHLs for bluefish are shown in the table below. The Council and Board also agreed to maintain the current bluefish recreational bag limits (5 fish per day for private anglers and 7 fish per day for anglers on for-hire vessels).

Species	Commercial Quota <i>millions of pounds</i>		Recreational Harvest Limit <i>millions of pounds</i>	
	2026	2027	2026	2027
Bluefish	4.66	4.75	22.02	22.50

Prompted by a discussion of the Commission's Interstate Fisheries Management Program Policy Board (Policy Board) during its Summer Meeting, the Board and Council discussed the timeline for the Recreational Sector Separation Amendment. The Policy Board discussed that the timeline should include additional opportunities to (1) review the outcomes of the upcoming Recreational Sector Separation Stakeholder Workshop, (2) provide feedback on development of the draft options/alternatives, and (3) allow the Fishery Management Action Team/Plan Development Team sufficient time to incorporate that feedback. Based on these considerations, the Board and Council agreed that the Policy Board and Council will have additional joint discussions at the Commission's Annual and Winter Meetings, held in November 2026 and January 2027, respectively, with approval of the draft options/alternatives anticipated at the January meeting. If approved, the document would be released for public comment throughout the winter, with final action considered in August 2027.

ASMFC BLUEFISH MANAGEMENT BOARD (AUGUST 12, 2026)

Meeting Summary

Under Board action only, the Board reviewed and approved the Bluefish FMP Review for the 2025 fishing year and state compliance reports. *De minimis* requests were approved for Maine, South Carolina, and Georgia. Finally, the Board elected Mike Luisi from Maryland as Vice Chair. For more information, please contact Chelsea Tuohy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at ctuohy@asmfc.org.

Motions

Move to approve the Bluefish Fishery Management Plan Review for the 2025 fishing year, state compliance reports, and *de minimis* requests from Maine, South Carolina, and Georgia.

Motion made by Mr. Grist and seconded by Mr. Hasbrouck. Motion passes without objection.

Move to elect Mike Luisi as Vice Chair.

Motion made by Mr. Maniscalco and seconded by Mr. Cimino. Motion passes without objection.