



## Council Meeting Summary

December 10-12, 2013  
Annapolis, MD

Meeting Materials, Presentations, and Audio Files are available online at [www.mafmc.org/briefing/december-2013](http://www.mafmc.org/briefing/december-2013).

### Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass

#### **Recreational Management Measures**

The Council met jointly with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Board (Board) to establish recreational management measures for 2014. During the meeting, the Board approved Draft Addendum XXV for public comment. The addendum, which is intended to provide more equity in recreational harvest opportunities, includes options for regional management of summer flounder and ad-hoc regional management of black sea bass. The Council and Board's recommendations for 2014 were based on the current management systems for both fisheries, and some recommendations were contingent on the outcome of the addendum. [Click here to read the Commission's press release on Draft Addendum XXV.](#)

**Summer Flounder:** The Council and Board recommended the use of conservation equivalency to achieve the recreational harvest limit of 7.01 million pounds for the 2014 summer flounder fishery. Conservation equivalency allows individual states or regions to develop recreational measures (i.e., possession limits, size limits, and seasons) to achieve a state- or region-specific harvest target. The combination of these measures would be equivalent to the non-preferred coastwide alternative approved by the Council and Board, which includes a four fish possession limit, an 18-inch total length (TL) minimum size, and an open season from May 1 through September 30, 2014. In addition, a precautionary default measure of a two fish possession limit, a 20-inch TL minimum size, and an open season of May 1 - September 30, 2014 was approved for states that do not develop management measures consistent with the conservation equivalency guidelines. Draft Addendum XXV includes several options for summer flounder recreational management in 2014, with possible extension into 2015.

**Scup:** The Board voted to continue the regional approach to scup management in state waters in 2014. For federal waters, the Council and Board recommended a 9-inch total length (TL) minimum fish size, a 30 fish possession limit, and an open season from January 1 through December 31, 2014. The states will develop state-specific management measures for approval at the Commission's February meeting.

**Black Sea Bass:** The Council and Board recommended recreational measures that would achieve the necessary reduction in landings (7%) on a coastwide basis, in both state and federal waters. If Addendum XXV addresses the necessary reduction in state waters, federal measures would include a 15 fish possession limit, a 12.5-inch TL minimum fish size, and an open season from May 19 through September 18, and October 18 through December 31, 2014. In the event that the Addendum does not address the necessary reduction, the Council and Board recommended that coastwide measures be implemented, including a 13-inch TL minimum size, a 5 fish possession limit, and an open season from June 1-September 30 in both state and federal waters. The Council voted to consider opening the fishery in January and February (wave 1), 2015, contingent upon additional reporting, with a possession limit of 15 fish. The Council will take further action on this item later in 2014, after an evaluation of reporting options. The Commission's Draft Addendum XXV includes options for ad hoc regional management of black sea bass in state waters for 2014, with possible extension into 2015.

**Summary of Proposed Recreational Management Measures**

	<b>Rec. Harvest Limit</b> <i>(million pounds)</i>	<b>Minimum Fish Size (TL)</b>	<b>Possession Limit</b>	<b>Season</b>
<b>Summer Flounder</b>	<b>Conservation equivalency</b> (measures will be developed by state or region and approved at the Commission's February meeting)			
<b>Black Sea Bass</b> <i>Federal measures to be implemented IF Addendum XXV addresses the required reduction</i>	2.26	12.5-inch	15	May 19 – Sept 18 Oct 18 – Dec 31
<b>Scup</b> <i>Federal waters measures</i>	7.03	9-inch	30	Jan 1 – Dec 31

Please note that 2015 specifications are subject to adjustment in 2014.

**Spiny Dogfish**

The Council considered alternatives to the current 4,000 pound commercial trip limit for spiny dogfish. Options that were discussed included a very large trip limit (20,000 pound) to accommodate multi-day trips, trip limits that could vary by vessel capacity, a trigger for in-season trip limit adjustment, and elimination of the federal trip limit. The Council ultimately chose to maintain existing trip limits after considering current market constraints and consistency issues with state jurisdictional fisheries. The New England Council will address spiny dogfish specifications at its January meeting.

**Highly Migratory Species**

The Council will communicate its position regarding Amendment 7 to the NMFS Highly Migratory Species Plan via a letter before the January 10, 2014 comment period deadline. The Council supports certain increases to monitoring and accountability for bluefin tuna catch in the pelagic longline fisheries, but decided that some provisions, especially the proposed incidental individual bluefin tuna transferable quota (IBQ) needed further development before implementation. The Council will also voice opposition to re-organization of the recreational trophy bluefin quota, which would leave the Northern area (Mid-Atlantic and New England) with a very small trophy bluefin quota.

**Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish**

**Framework 9 and River Herring and Shad Approach**

The Council took several steps for improving river herring and shad conservation. Regarding Framework 9 to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Fishery Management Plan, the Council approved a range of options to ensure that observers sample as much of the catch as possible on observed trips. Regarding broader river herring and shad conservation efforts, the Council approved a plan to establish a Council Committee, Technical Workgroup, and Advisory Panel that will focus on determining appropriate overall catch levels that could inform the catch caps that limit river herring and shad catch in federal waters.

**Executive Committee**

**2014 Implementation Plan**

The Executive Committee reviewed a revised draft of the 2014 Implementation Plan and approved several final revisions. The full Council reviewed the committee's revisions and approved the final 2014 implementation plan. The final plan will be available on the Council's website at [www.mafmc.org/strategic-plan](http://www.mafmc.org/strategic-plan).

**February 11-13, 2014**

Doubletree by Hilton New Bern – Riverfront  
100 Middle St.  
New Bern, NC 28560

Go to [www.mafmc.org/briefing-books](http://www.mafmc.org/briefing-books) to view the full 2014 meeting schedule.