



**Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Monitoring  
Committee Webinar Meeting Summary - Scup  
July 24, 2017**

**Monitoring Committee Attendees:** Tiffany Vidal (MA DMF), Greg Wojcik (CT DEEP), John Maniscalco (NY DEC), Peter Clarke (NJ F&W), Rich Wong (DE DFW), Steve Doctor (MD DNR), Joe Cimino (VMRC), Todd Daniel VanMiddlesworth (NC DMF), Kiley Dancy (MAFMC staff), Kirby Rootes-Murdy (ASMFC staff), John Carmichael (SAFMC staff), Mark Terceiro (NMFS NEFSC)

**Additional Attendees:** Morgan Brunbauer (NY DEC), Katie Almeida (Town Dock), Mike Ruccio (NMFS GARFO), Jim (no last name provided)

**General Comments**

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The Monitoring Committee (MC) does not currently have any formal control rules for the recommendation of Annual Catch Targets (ACTs). The MC recognizes the need to develop ACT control rules or guidelines for addressing management uncertainty in the future, which would be applicable to all three species.

**Scup Comments and Recommendations**

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The MC agreed with the staff recommendation for scup ACLs and ACTs for 2018-2019 as described in the staff memo dated July 7, 2017.<sup>1</sup> The MC agreed that a more moderate increase in allowable catch should be taken, rather than the full 45% increase between the previously implemented 2018 ABC and the Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) recommended 2018 ABC. The MC supported the staff recommendation to take half of that allowable increase (22.5%) at the ACT level, and additionally to set the 2019 ACTs at the same level as the revised 2018 ACTs (Table 1).

The MC noted that there is some management uncertainty associated with changes to the scup commercial quota period dates in 2018. The shift of October from Summer to Winter II may impact total commercial landings and the distribution of landings by state, by allowing coastwide access and higher possession limits during that month. In addition, recreational estimate revisions from MRIP within the next year also introduce a major source of management uncertainty. The MC expressed concern that drastic catch limit increases have the potential to be followed by large cutbacks, especially given the uncertainty in how the MRIP revisions will impact the stock assessment. More moderate changes, as opposed to large swings in quota, provide for more stability in the fisheries.

The MC noted that for the past five years the recreational and commercial scup fisheries have under-harvested their landings limits by 20-51%. The staff and MC recommended ACTs result in

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<sup>1</sup> Staff note an error in the text on page 2 of the staff memo: the recreational ACT recommendation is 7.29 million lb or 3,307 mt. The numbers are correct in Table 1 of that memo and in Table 2 of this report.

commercial quotas that are higher than the commercial fishery landings in any year since quotas were initially implemented in 1997, and recreational harvest limits higher than any recreational landings achieved since 2004.

The MC also agreed with the staff recommendation that no changes be made to the commercial minimum fish size (9-inch total length), gear requirements, and possession limits.

**Table 1:** Currently implemented scup catch and landings limits for 2017-2018, and Monitoring Committee recommendations for 2018-2019. Numbers may not add precisely due to unit conversions and rounding.

Management measure	Current Year		Previously-Implemented		Monitoring Committee Recommended Revisions				MC Recommendation Basis
	2017		2018		2018		2019		
	<i>mil lb</i>	<i>mt</i>	<i>mil lb</i>	<i>mt</i>	<i>mil lb</i>	<i>mt</i>	<i>mil lb</i>	<i>mt</i>	
<b>OFL</b>	32.09	14,556	29.68	13,464	45.05	20,433	41.03	18,612	Assessment projections
<b>ABC</b>	28.40	12,881	27.05	12,270	39.14	17,755	36.43	16,525	Assessment projections & risk policy
<b>ABC discards</b>	4.52	2,049	4.50	2,043	5.91	2,679	5.08	2,304	Assessment projections
<b>Commercial ACL</b>	22.15	10,047	21.10	9,571	30.53	13,849	28.42	12,890	78% of ABC (per FMP)
<b>Commercial ACT</b>	22.15	10,047	21.10	9,571	25.85	11,724	25.85	11,724	Previously-implemented 2018 commercial ACT increased by 22.5%
<b>Projected commercial discards</b>	3.77	1,710	3.76	1,705	5.15	2,338	4.43	2,011	87.3% of ABC discards (avg. % of dead discards from commercial fishery, 2014-2016)
<b>Commercial quota</b>	18.38	8,337	17.34	7,866	20.69	9,386	20.69	9,386	Commercial ACT minus projected 2018 discards
<b>Recreational ACL</b>	6.25	2,834	5.95	2,699	8.61	3,906	8.01	3,636	22% of ABC (per FMP)
<b>Recreational ACT</b>	6.25	2,834	5.95	2,699	7.29	3,307	7.29	3,307	Previously-implemented 2018 recreational ACT increased by 22.5%
<b>Projected recreational discards</b>	0.75	339	0.75	338	0.75	341	0.65	293	12.7% of the ABC discards (avg. % of dead discards from rec. fishery, 2014-2016)
<b>RHL</b>	5.50	2,495	5.21	2,361	6.54	2,966	6.54	2,966	Recreational ACT minus projected 2018 discards