



**Comprehensive Summer Flounder Amendment to the  
Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan  
Draft Action Plan (updated as of 6/2/16)**

<http://www.mafmc.org/actions/summer-flounder-amendment>

**Council:** Mid-Atlantic (joint with Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission)

**Title of Action:** Comprehensive Summer Flounder Amendment to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP

**Applicable Fisheries:** Summer Flounder (commercial and recreational)

**Purpose and Need:** The purpose of this amendment is to complete a comprehensive review of all aspects of the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass FMP related to summer flounder. This will include revisiting and updating the goals and objectives of the plan for summer flounder, as well as re-examining and modifying as necessary any and all fishery management strategies necessary to achieve those goals and objectives.

**Type of NEPA Analysis Expected:** Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

**Additional Expertise Sought:** The Fisheries Management Action Team (FMAT) for this action will be composed of Council staff and management partners from the Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, with input from other organizations as appropriate. The FMAT will serve as the primary team for amendment development and analysis, but will work with several working groups to address specific issues.

Agency	Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT) Role	Person(s)
MAFMC	Council Staff (Plan Coordinator)	Kiley Dancy
ASMFC	Commission Staff (Plan Coordinator)	Kirby Rootes-Murdy
ASMFC	Commission Staff (Plan Coordinator)	Max Appelman
NMFS GARFO	Sustainable Fisheries (Plan Coordinator)	Moira Kelly/Emily Gilbert
NMFS GARFO	NEPA	Katherine Richardson
NMFS GARFO	Habitat	David Stevenson
NMFS NEFSC	Stock Assessment/Technical	Mark Terceiro
NMFS NEFSC	Socioeconomics	Scott Steinback
NMFS GARFO	General Counsel (consulted as needed)	Kevin Collins

**Working Groups:** The FMAT will work with topic-specific working groups that will be formed to complete technical work and analyses related to specific aspects of summer flounder management. These working groups are envisioned as a means to more efficiently address many important and complicated issues within a large and complex amendment. Two issue-specific working groups will be formed during initial development of alternatives: one for commercial issues and one for recreational issues. The working groups will be populated with individuals with technical expertise relevant to the issue, who are available and willing to actively participate in document development and technical analysis. For each working group, this will include a subset of the FMAT, several Technical/Monitoring Committee members, and potentially additional experts (state or federal agency, academic, or other) with relevant expertise (subject to the availability of funding, if necessary).

**Types of Measures Expected to be Considered:** In December 2014, the Council and Board identified several general categories of issues to be addressed by this amendment. The FMAT will develop a wide range of management options for the Council to consider. These could include alternatives to address issues including, but not limited to:

- FMP goals and objectives for summer flounder
- Quota allocation between the commercial and recreational fisheries
- Commercial summer flounder management measures and strategies (some changes can be made through the annual specifications process and would not require an amendment):
  - Commercial fishing gear requirements and restrictions, including, but not limited to: mesh requirements, net dimensions, bycatch reduction devices, etc.
  - Minimum fish size requirements
  - Possession limit and trigger requirements
  - Time/area closures and exemption programs
  - Licensing/permits
  - Commercial quota allocation strategies
  - Landings flexibility (regional, coastwide, other)
- Recreational summer flounder management measures and strategies:
  - Recreational bag limits, size limits, and seasonal limits
  - Recreational fishing gear requirements and restrictions
  - Inter-jurisdictional management processes and strategies (including use of state-by-state or regional Conservation Equivalency vs. Coastwide measures)
  - Management strategies specific to the party/charter (for-hire) recreational fleet
  - Management strategies specific to private recreational anglers
  - Recreational quota allocation strategies (by state, fishing sector, other)

Under the umbrella of the above categories, the Council and Board have indicated that they may also explore alternatives related to the following:

- Summer flounder discards in the commercial and recreational fisheries
- Ecosystem, habitat, bycatch, and protected species issues
- Data collection requirements and protocols
- Other issues not listed above

**Applicable laws/issues:**

Magnuson-Stevens Act	Yes
Administrative Procedures Act	Yes
Regulatory Flexibility Act	Yes
Paperwork Reduction Act	Possibly; depends on data collection needs
Coastal Zone Management Act	Possibly; depends on effects of the action on the resources of the coastal states in the management unit
Endangered Species Act	Possibly; level of consultation, if necessary, depends on the actions taken
E.O. 12866 (Regulatory Planning and Review)	Yes
E.O. 12630 (Takings)	Possibly; legal review will confirm
E.O. 13123 (Federalism)	Possibly; legal review will confirm
Essential Fish Habitat	Possibly
Information Quality Act	Yes

**Current Amendment Timeline (as of 6/2/16; subject to change):**

<i>December 2013</i>	<i>Council initiates amendment</i>
<i>April-June 2014</i>	<i>Draft action plan developed; Fishery Management Action Team (FMAT) formed</i>
<i>June 2014</i>	<i>Council's Demersal Committee meets to discuss scoping process</i>
<i>August 2014</i>	<i>Joint Council and Commission draft scoping document developed; Council and Commission review and approve draft document for public comment</i>
<i>September/ October 2014</i>	<i>Scoping hearings and public comment period</i>
<i>December 2014</i>	<i>Council and Commission identify priority issues for inclusion in the amendment</i>
<i>April 2015</i>	<i>FMAT meeting (webinar)</i>
<i>August 2015</i>	<i>Status update at August joint Council/Board meeting; intro to Fisheries Forum goals &amp; objectives project</i>
<i>Fall 2015</i>	<i>Fisheries Forum project to synthesize Council/Board input on FMP goals and objectives; FMAT meeting for goals and objectives recommendations</i>
<i>December 2015</i>	<i>Council and Commission workshop on FMP goals and objectives (with Fisheries Forum); amendment status update</i>
<i>Winter 2016</i>	<i>Issue-specific working groups established; FMAT and working group meetings</i>
Spring/Summer 2016	FMAT begins development of range of alternatives, develops tasks for working groups; Advisory Panel feedback sought on potential alternatives.
Summer/Fall 2016	FMAT and working groups continue development of alternatives; Council and Commission review FMAT and working group recommendations and draft alternatives; Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) development begins
Late 2016/Early 2017	Range of options refined and approved for public hearings; analysis of alternatives; approval of DEIS
Spring/Summer 2017	Public hearings
Summer/Fall 2017	Council and Commission consider public comments; final action
Late 2017/Early 2018	Final Environmental Impact Statement developed; rulemaking and comment periods (5-7 months)
Spring/Summer 2018	Final rule effective

\**Italics* = complete