Suggested Strategy to Manage Commercial Summer Flounder

At the recent Demersal Committee meeting Chairman Luisi asked Council members to forward possible management scenarios to the staff for review prior to the next Council meeting. Below is a suggested scenario.

The process outlined below combines the elements of regional management, the current distribution of the summer flounder stock and the system used to manage scup.

Regional Management: As a suggested starting point the range of summer flounder should be divided into three regions:
- Southern region: North Carolina to Virginia
- Mid-Atlantic region: Delaware to Connecticut
- New England region: Rhode Island to Maine

Quota Allocation: Using the same survey information that is used to develop the summer flounder assessment, determine the percentage of the summer flounder stock that is located within each of the three regions. And assign that percentage of the TAC, the regional quota, to each of the three regions.

Scup Plan: As per the scup plan divide the calendar year into three periods: Period #1, January to April, Period #2 May to September, Period #3 October to December. During periods #1 and #3 all federal vessels will fish during periods #1 and #3, under regulations, i.e. trip limits, minimum size, mesh size, assigned to each of the three regions. During period #2, vessels will not follow a federal waters quota but will fish under state specific regulations developed from the same survey data used to assign the quota to the three regions, with special emphasis on the NEMAP data due to the inshore nature of the NEMAP survey.

There are many advantages to the above strategy, (1) does not rely on state landings that are currently skewed due to the nature of the state by state system, (2) utilizes the current distribution of the stock, instead of the distribution that existed forty years ago, (3) permits the states to manage their state waters fisheries when the stock is in state waters.

To preserve the ITQ system used by the state of Maryland I propose the State be exempted from the above management scenario, and be assigned a quota of 2.04% of the TAC which is similar to their current state allocation.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal, Tony