Council Meets in Alexandria, Virginia

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council met in Alexandria, Virginia last week to consider a number of issues. The Council's Demersal Committee met with the ASMFC's Board to consider the alternatives that will be included in Framework 5 to the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Framework 5, which could implement multi-year specifications for all three species, will be presented to the Council in March.

The Council also heard a number of presentations on fishery dependent data collection systems, bycatch, and cooperative research. An advisory report of the 38th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop regarding stock assessments on ocean quahogs and butterfish was also presented. At the meeting, the Council adopted a motion to identify a controlled access program for Atlantic mackerel as the primary purpose of Amendment 10 to the Atlantic Mackerel, Squid and Butterfish FMP. The Council also adopted a motion that Amendment 10 should consider the creation of a separate FMP for Atlantic Mackerel if supported by a cost benefit analysis.

Finally, the Council agreed to send a letter to the FDA requesting the retraction of the draft consumer advisory on the risks of methyl mercury in tilefish. Instead, the Council recommended that the FDA use more recent data in order to inform the public of lower concentrations of mercury in tilefish than previously reported.

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