**Summer Flounder**

The purpose of this meeting was to review the 2023 commercial summer flounder fishery and discuss trip limit modifications to the 2024 fishery.

NJDFW staff provided advisors with current 2023 summer flounder commercial fishery

landings. Currently there is approximately 600,000 pounds of summer flounder projected to be available for the final season of the 2023 commercial fishery. Trip limit modifications that reflect the remaining quota have been recommended by advisors and were implemented on November 1, 2023.

Additionally, advisors were presented with the preliminary 2024 commercial summer

flounder quota for New Jersey. The Preliminary quota for New Jersey is 1,470,127 pounds, which reflects a 42% reduction relative to the 2023 fishing year.

Based upon this preliminary quota for the summer flounder commercial fishery, the Committee’s preferred trip limits for the 2024 commercial fishing year are as follows:

Season 1 (January-February): option A- 1,750-pound trip two times per week **or**

option B- 3,500-pound trip one time per week.

Season 2 (March-April): option A- 285-pound trip seven times per week **or**

option B- 500-pound trip four times per week **or**

option C- 1,000-pound trip two times per week **or**

option D- 2,000-pound trip one time per week.

Season 3 (May-June): option A- 214-pound trip seven times per week **or**

option B- 500-pound trip three times per week **or**

option C- 750-pound trip two times per week **or**

option D- 1,500-pound trip one time per week.

Season 4 (July-August): option A- 214-pound trip seven times per week **or**

option B- 500-pound trip three times per week **or**

option C- 750-pound trip two times per week **or**

option D- 1,500-pound trip one time per week.

Season 5 (September-October): option A- 500-pound trip seven times per week **or**

option B- 875-pound trip four times per week **or**

option C- 1,750-pound trip two times per week **or**

option D- 3,500-pound trip one time per week.

Season 6 (November-December): option A- 500-pound trip four times per week **or**

option B- 1,000-pound trip two times per week **or**

option C- 2,000-pound trip one time per week.

Options cannot be combined under any circumstance for a given season. Once a trip has been landed under one option, the vessel is restricted to only that option for the remainder of the \

fishing week (Sunday-Saturday). Once the following fishing week begins (12:00 a.m. Sunday), the vessel can choose another option under the corresponding season.

The Committee recommends the commercial trip limits for the 2024 commercial summer flounder fishing year as provided in this report.

Lastly, Advisors voiced their concerns over a regulatory statute limiting the distance from shore that a commercial otter trawl can be operated. As referenced in N.J.A.C 7:25-18.14(b), *No vessel may have available for immediate use any otter or beam trawl while on the marine waters of this State during the hours between sunset and sunrise except on the Atlantic Ocean, at a distance of greater than two miles from the coastline.* Advisors recommended that the state regulation be rescinded to allow for fishing within two miles of the New Jersey coast.