A joint meeting of the NJ Marine Fisheries Council’s Recreational Summer Flounder and Black Sea Bass/Scup Advisory Committees were held via webinar on January 22, 2025 to discuss the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commissions Recreational Measures Setting Process Addenda. This Addenda will define the process that will be used to set recreational measures for the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass fisheries in the future.

**Current Process**

The current process for setting recreational measures for these species, referred to as the Percent Change Approach, was implemented through the Harvest Control Rule Framework/Addenda in 2023. The goal of the Harvest Control Rule Framework/Addenda was to establish a process such that recreational measures aim to prevent overfishing, are reflective of stock status, appropriately account for uncertainty in the recreational data, take into consideration angler preferences, and provide an appropriate level of stability and predictability in changes from year to year. The Council and the Commission agreed that the Percent Change Approach should sunset by the end of 2025 with the goal of implementing an improved long-term process for setting recreational measures, starting with the 2026 measures. A copy of the Addenda can be found on the ASMFC website; (chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://asmfc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/RecMeasuresSettingProcessDraftAddenda\_PublicComment\_Dec2024.pdf). The goal of the Recreational Measures Setting Process Addenda is to consider the process for setting recreational measures for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish for 2026 and beyond.

**Decision Point and Public Comment**

Because of the complex nature of the Addenda, Staff provided Council and Advisors with a brief overview of the addenda, a short presentation of the options, and the opportunity for Council and Advisors to discuss their preferred option amongst the group. The Addenda includes 5 options;

* A: The previously used method where all individual States would design their own methodology for technical committee approval each year for their list of options.
* B: Percent Change Approach which is what we are currently using within the Harvest Control Rules.
* C: Modified Percent Change Approach using RHL and Harvest.
* D: Modified Percent Change Approach using ACT and Catch.
* E: Biomass & Fishing mortality matrix approach.

Advisors were decidedly in favor of Option C where the current Harvest Control Rules would still be implemented but with the added functionality of using the RHL and Harvest to determine the Percent Change. This option adds an additional biomass category (i.e., around the target), treats overfished stocks separately, and adds more opportunities for status quo harvest levels. As with the currently implemented Percent Change Approach, recreational measures under this option must aim to achieve a specified percent change in harvest compared to the expectation of harvest in the upcoming two years under current measures. The resulting value of harvest in pounds is referred to as the harvest target.

Attendance;

Staff-Jeffrey Brust, Heather Corbett, Joseph Cimino, Michael Celestino, Peter Clarke.

Council-Bob Rush, Eleanor Bochanick, Jeff Kaelin, Pat Donnelly.

Advisors- Adam Nowalski, Bob Cope, Greg Hueth, John Toth, Mickey Sherry, Paul Haertel, Peter Belasco, Ray Bogan, Stephen Machalaba, Tom Daffin, Tony Butch, Victor Hartley.