



Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

Sustainably Managing Atlantic Coastal Fisheries

Board Seeks Input on Regional Management Options for Black Sea Bass Recreational Fisheries for 2018 and beyond

States schedule public hearings on Draft Addendum XXX

Atlantic states from Massachusetts through Virginia have scheduled their hearings to gather public comment on Draft Addendum XXX to the Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan. The details of those hearings follow:

MA Division of Marine Fisheries

January 9, 2018 at 6 PM

Bourne Community Center, Room 2
239 Main Street, Buzzards Bay, MA
Contact: [Nichola Meserve](mailto:Nichola.Meserve@dmf.maher.com) at 617.626.1531

CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection

January 10, 2018 at 7 PM

Marine Headquarters, Boating Education Ctr (Rear Building)
333 Ferry Road, Old Lyme, Connecticut
Contact: [Mark Alexander](mailto:Mark.Alexander@dep.state.ct.us) at 860.447.4322

RI Division of Fish & Wildlife

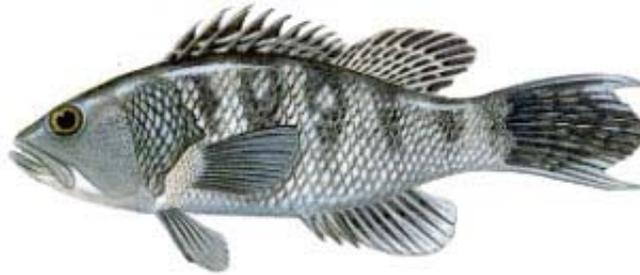
January 17, 2018 at 6 PM

University of Rhode Island Bay Campus
Corless Auditorium, South Ferry Road, Narragansett, RI
Contact: [Robert Ballou](mailto:Robert.Ballou@dfw.state.ri.us) at 401.222.4700 ext. 4420

Draft Addendum XXX was initiated to consider alternative regional management approaches for the recreational fishery, including options for **regional allocation** of the recreational harvest limit (RHL) based on historical harvest and exploitable biomass. The Draft Addendum also includes an option for coastwide management of black sea bass recreational fisheries should a regional approach not be approved for management.

In recent years, challenges in the black sea bass recreational fishery have centered on providing equitable access to the resource in the face of uncertain population size, structure, and distribution.

Since 2012, the recreational fishery has been managed under an ad-hoc regional management approach, whereby the states of Massachusetts through New Jersey have individually crafted measures aimed at reducing harvest by the same percent, while the states of Delaware through North Carolina have set their regulations consistent with the federal waters measures. While this approach allowed the states flexibility in setting measures, some states expressed concerns about equity and



accountability in constraining harvest to coastwide catch limits.

Additionally, the 2016 Benchmark Stock Assessment provided information on the abundance and distribution of the resource along the coast that was

not previously available to include in the management program.

Draft Addendum XXX proposes two approaches for regional allocation of the RHL in the black sea bass recreational fishery:

(1) allocation based on a combination of stock biomass and harvest information, or

(2) allocation based solely on historical harvest.

The regional allocation options offer advantages over coastwide regulations by addressing geographic differences in the stock (size, abundance, and seasonality) while allowing for more uniformity in measures between neighboring states.

The Draft Addendum also proposes an option for evaluating harvest and adjusting measures against the annual catch limit, which aims to reduce year to year changes in management measures.

Anglers and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on Draft Addendum XXX either by attending state public hearings or providing written comment. The Draft Addendum is available at http://www.asmfc.org/files/PublicInput/BSBDraftAddendumXXX_PublicComment.pdf and can also be accessed on the Commission website (www.asmfc.org) under Public Input.

To aid the submission of public comment, please refer to the decision tree found in Appendix III on PDF page 23, which outlines the management options being considered. Public comment will be accepted until 5:00 PM (EST) on January 22, 2018 and should be forwarded to Caitlin Starks, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201; 703.842.0741 (fax) or at comments@asmfc.org (Subject line: Draft Addendum XXX).

Bluefish Changes Proposed
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