



# Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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## **Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass** **2019 Specifications**

*Effective Date: January 1, 2019*

We have published a final rule that implements the following measures:

1. Summer flounder and black sea bass 2019 commercial and recreational catch limits (including state quotas for summer flounder);
2. A commercial summer flounder accountability measure that adjusts the 2019 annual catch target and quota because of a prior year overage;
3. Reopens the black sea bass recreational fishery for the month of February; and
4. Increases the commercial incidental possession limit from April 15 through June 15 for scup.

The 2019 scup catch limits are unchanged from those implemented last year but are repeated here for ease of reference.

A new assessment for summer flounder will be finalized in early 2019; any adjustment to the summer flounder specifications as a result will be taken up by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Additional letters will be sent outlining any changes being implemented mid-year.

### **Summer Flounder Specifications**

#### **Commercial Summer Flounder Quota Adjustment**

In 2017, estimated discards were higher than expected, resulting in the annual catch limit being exceeded. The commercial summer flounder accountability measure requires a scaled payback against the annual catch target (ACT) based on stock status. As such, the 2019 annual catch target is reduced by 1.04 million lb. Using the projected discards for 2019, the final 2019 commercial summer flounder quota is 6,670,000 lb. If the assessment results in changes to the current stock determination criteria, any adjustments to the summer flounder specifications can incorporate a re-evaluation of this accountability measure.

#### **Commercial Summer Flounder State Quotas**

To account for this adjusted 2019 quota, as well as any other overages incurred by individual states, we've outlined updated 2019 flounder state quotas in the table below.

**2019 State-By-State Commercial Summer Flounder Quotas, in pounds**

	FMP Percent Share	2019 Initial Quota	2019 Adjusted Quota (2018 ACL overage deducted)	2019 Preliminary Overages <sup>1</sup>	Adjusted 2019 Quota, Less Overages <sup>2</sup>
Maine	0.04756	3,672	3,172	0	3,172
New Hampshire	0.00046	36	31	0	31
Massachusetts	6.82046	526,540	454,925	-7,559	447,366
Rhode Island	15.68298	1,210,726	1,046,055	0	1,046,055
Connecticut	2.25708	174,247	150,547	0	150,547
New York	7.64699	590,348	510,054	0	510,054
New Jersey	16.72499	1,291,169	1,115,557	0	1,115,557
Delaware	0.01779	1,373	1,187	-55,047	-53,860
Maryland	2.0391	157,419	136,008	0	136,008
Virginia	21.31676	1,645,654	1,421,828	0	1,421,828
North Carolina	27.44584	2,118,819	1,830,638	0	1,830,638
Total	100	7,720,000	6,670,000	0	6,661,255

<sup>1</sup>2018 quota overage is determined through comparison of landings for January through October 2018 plus any landings in 2017 in excess of the 2017 quota that were not previously addressed in the 2018 quota specifications.

<sup>2</sup>Total quota is the sum of all states having allocation. A state with a negative number has an allocation of zero (0).

**Delaware Commercial Summer Flounder Closure**

The amount of overharvest from previous years is again greater than the amount of commercial quota allocated to Delaware for 2019. As a result, there is no quota available for 2019 in Delaware and the commercial fishery is closed. Effective January 1, 2019, landings of summer flounder in Delaware by vessels holding commercial Federal summer flounder permits are prohibited for the 2019 calendar year. If a quota transfer occurs and the commercial fishery in Delaware is opened, we will announce the changes in the *Federal Register* and notify you in another fishery bulletin.

**Black Sea Bass Specifications**

The 2019 black sea bass specifications are identical to those in place for 2018.

**2019 Black Sea Bass Specifications, in millions of pounds.**

	2019
Commercial Annual Catch Limit/Annual Catch Target	4.35
Commercial Quota	3.52
Recreational Annual Catch Limit and Annual Catch Target	4.59
Recreational Harvest Limit	3.66

### **Recreational Black Sea Bass Wave 1 Fishery**

The Federal recreational black sea bass fishery will be open during the month of February 2019 (February 1-28). The current recreational management measures of a 12.5-inch minimum size and 15-fish possession limit apply during this season.

Remember that Federally permitted charter/party vessels are required to abide by the more restrictive set of regulations when Federal and state measures differ. If you have questions regarding your state's recreational management measures, please contact the marine fisheries management agency for the state in question or the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission ([www.asmf.org](http://www.asmf.org); 703-842-0740).

### **Scup Specifications**

#### **2019 Scup Specifications, in millions of pounds.**

	2019
Commercial Annual Catch Limit	28.42
Commercial Annual Catch Target	28.42
Commercial Quota	23.98
Recreational Annual Catch Limit	8.01
Recreational Annual Catch Target	8.01
Recreational Harvest Limit	7.37

#### **Scup initial commercial quota allocations for 2019 and Initial Trip Limits, in pounds.**

Season	Percent Share	Quota <sup>1</sup>	Possession Limits (per trip) <sup>2</sup>
Winter I	45.11	10,820,000	50,000
Summer	38.95	9,340,986	--
Winter II	15.94	3,822,816	12,000
Total	100.0	23,983,802	

<sup>1</sup>There were no applicable overages through 10/31/18.

<sup>2</sup>The Winter I possession limit will drop to 1,000 lb upon attainment of 80 percent of that period's allocation. The Winter II possession limit may be adjusted (in association with a transfer of unused Winter I quota to the Winter II period) via notification in the *Federal Register*.

### **Scup incidental possession limit adjustments**

This action adjusts to the gear-based incidental possession limit for the commercial fishery. The incidental possession limit applies to vessels with commercial moratorium scup permits fishing with nets with diamond mesh smaller than 5 inches in diameter. The incidental possession limit was previously 1,000 pounds during October 1-April 30 and 200 pounds during May 1-September 30. The action adds another threshold period from April 15 through June 15 to allow for higher retention in the small-mesh squid fishery that operates during that time and occasionally catches larger amounts of scup than the current limits allow to be landed. During that time, vessels using small mesh can land up to 2,000 pounds of scup.

**Adjustment to the scup incidental possession limit.**

	<b>Jan</b>	<b>Feb</b>	<b>Mar</b>	<b>Apr</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>Jun</b>	<b>July</b>	<b>Aug</b>	<b>Sept</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
<b>Previous</b>	1,000 lb				200 lb				1,000 lb			
<b>Revised</b>	1,000 lb			2,000 lb		200 lb			1,000 lb			

**Other Recreational Fishing Measures**

The management measures for the recreational summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass fisheries will be finalized through a separate rulemakings in the spring of 2019. We will notify you when they are complete.