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Director

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

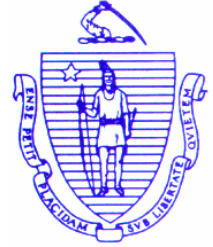
Division of Marine Fisheries

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April 3, 2006

Marine Fisheries Advisory

**COMMONWEALTH TO HOST ASMFC HEARING ON
DEVELOPMENT OF AMENDMENTS XIV & XV TO SUMMER
FLOUNDER, SCUP, AND BLACK SEA BASS INTERSTATE PLAN -
MA Hearing on Thursday, April 20th**

The Commonwealth will host an ASMFC hearing on a Public Information Document (PID) concerning Amendments XIV and XV to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Summer Flounder (fluke), Scup, and Black Sea Bass. The hearing will start at 6PM on Thursday, April 20th at the Radisson in Plymouth Harbor (180 Water St., Plymouth, MA). Please see the ASMFC press releases below and visit www.asmfc.org for further information.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 24, 2006

PRESS CONTACT:
Tina Berger (202) 289-6400

**ASMFC Board Approves Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Public
Information Document for Public Comment
*States Schedule Hearings for April***

Washington, DC – The Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board has approved the release of the Public Information Document (PID) for proposed Amendments 14 & 15 to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for public comment and review. The PID is part of the development of two amendments under the Commission process. The Amendment 14 portion of the PID addresses the development of a rebuilding schedule for scup, while the Amendment 15 portion of the PID addresses a broad range of issues concerning summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass fisheries. Following this first round of public scoping meetings and input, development of the draft amendments will continue on different schedules. The PID can be obtained via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News.

States from Massachusetts through North Carolina have scheduled the dates and times of their public meetings to gather comment on the PID. The details of those meetings follow:

Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

April 20, 2006, 6:00 PM

Radisson Plymouth Harbor
180 Water Street
Plymouth, Massachusetts

Contact: David Pierce at (617) 626-1532

Rhode Island Division of Fish and Wildlife

April 10, 2006, 6:00 PM

URI Narragansett Bay Campus, Corless Auditorium
South Ferry Road
Narragansett, Rhode Island

Contact: Brian Murphy at (401) 423-1941

Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection

April 11, 2006, 7:00 PM

Marine Headquarters
333 Ferry Road

Old Lyme, Connecticut

Contact: Dave Simpson at (860) 434-6043

New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation

*****Tentative Date & Location*****

April 18, 2006; 7:00 – 11:00 PM

Suffolk Community College

Brentwood Campus

Sagtikos Building

LIE Exit 53, Nicks Road

Brentwood New York

Contact: Gordon Colvin at (631) 444-0433

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

April 18, 2006, 7:00 PM

Ocean County Complex

118 Washington Street

Toms River, New Jersey

Contact: Tom McCloy at (609) 292-7794

Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife

April 18, 2006, 7:00 PM

DNREC Richardson and Robbins Building Auditorium

89 Kings Highway

Dover, Delaware

Contact: Rick Cole at (302)739-4782

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

April 10, 6:30 PM

Ocean Pines Library

11107 Cathell Road

Ocean Pines, Maryland

Contact: Howard J. King, III at (410) 260-8281

Virginia Marine Resources Commission

April 4, 2006, 7:00 PM

2600 Washington Ave, 4th floor

Newport News, Virginia
Contact: Jack Travelstead at (757) 247-2247

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

April 3, 2006, 7:00 PM

Roanoke Island Festival Park

One Festival Park

Manteo, North Carolina

Contact: Red Munden at (252) 726-7021

April 4, 2006, 7:00 PM

Carteret Community College

CMAST Building, Room 306

Morehead City, NC

Contact: Red Munden at (252) 726-7021

The PID is the first step in the Commission's amendment process. It is intended to gather information concerning the summer flounder, scup, and black sea bass fisheries and provide an opportunity for the public to identify major issues relative to the management of these species. The Amendment 14 portion of the PID addresses the development a rebuilding schedule for scup consistent with requirements of the Sustainable Fisheries Act. These may include fishing mortality rate thresholds and biological reference points. Because scup is jointly managed by the Commission and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council), the Commission will develop a rebuilding schedule in conjunction with the Council.

The Amendment 15 portion of the PID addresses a broad range of issues for all three species. These include exploring management strategies for allocating commercial quotas, identifying ways to quantify and reduce discards, expanding data collection requirements, and addressing the rollover of unused quotas in both commercial and recreational fisheries.

Following the initial phase of information-gathering and public comment, the Commission and Council will evaluate potential management alternatives and their impacts. The Commission and Council will then develop two separate draft amendments to the FMP with preferred management measures identified for the issues covered in each document. The draft amendments will then be released for public review and comment. Following the public comment period on a draft amendment, the Commission and Council will meet to specify the management measures that will be included in each of the new amendments. Tentative schedules for the development of the amendments can be found in the PID; the dates may change if the Commission and/or Council need additional time to complete any of the listed tasks.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the PID either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies of the PID can be obtained via the Commission's website at www.asmfc.org under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM on April 21, 2006** and should be forwarded to Toni Kerns, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at 1444 'Eye' Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202)289-6051 (fax) or tkerns@asmfc.org (Subject line: Amendment 14/15 PID). For more information, please contact Toni Kerns at (202) 289-6400 or tkerns@asmfc.org.

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