



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

(617) 626-1520 | www.mass.gov/marinefisheries



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Marine Fisheries Advisory

MID-ATLANTIC COUNCIL SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON SUMMER FLOUNDER MESH REGULATIONS AND EXEMPTIONS

The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council will hold a public webinar on Wednesday, November 1, from 2:00–5:00 PM, to solicit stakeholder input on several summer flounder regulations related to commercial minimum mesh sizes and their exemptions. Council staff and a contractor are currently evaluating whether modifications to these measures are needed. Feedback from fishing industry participants and other stakeholders is critical to a successful review of these regulations. The Council and Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Board will review public comments and consider next steps at their December 2023 joint meeting.

Which Regulations are Under Review?

- The summer flounder trawl gear minimum mesh sizes (5.5-inch diamond or 6.0-inch square). Based on a recent study there is some concern that the selectivity of the 6.0-inch square mesh is not equivalent to that of the 5.5-inch diamond mesh and the 6.0-inch square mesh may be retaining too many undersized fish.
- The Small Mesh Exemption Program (SMEP), which allows trawl vessels to obtain a Letter of Authorization (LOA) to land more than 200 pounds of summer flounder east of longitude 72° 30.0'W, from November 1 through April 30, using mesh smaller than 5.5-inch diamond or 6.0-inch square.
- The flynet exemption to the minimum mesh size requirement, which provides an exemption to the minimum mesh size requirements for vessels fishing with a two-seam otter trawl flynet.

Additional information and discussion questions for each issue can be found in an [Overview Document](#).

Please see the Council's [meeting webpage](#) for additional information, including how to register for the webinar and submit comments.

Written comments will be accepted until November 17, 2023.