



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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February 6, 2025

Marine Fisheries Advisory

ASMFC/MAFMC Scoping Hearings on Recreational Sector Separation and Data Collection Amendment for Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass, and Bluefish

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) are seeking public input on the Public Information/Scoping Document for the Recreational Sector Separation and Data Collection Amendment for Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass and Bluefish. The states of Maine through North Carolina have scheduled five hearings to gather public input, including a **virtual public hearing intended for Massachusetts stakeholders on March 5 at 6:00 pm** (however, you may attend any hearing). Please refer to the schedule below for more information.

The purpose of this proposed amendment is to consider modifications to the recreational management program for summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish. Specifically, this action may consider options for managing for-hire recreational fisheries separately from other recreational fishing modes (referred to as sector separation), as well as options related to the collection and use of recreational data, such as private angler reporting and enhanced for-hire vessel trip reporting requirements.

The ASMFC and MAFMC, which jointly manage these species in state waters (0-3 miles) and federal waters (3-200 miles) respectively, are currently conducting scoping for this action. Scoping is the first and best opportunity to provide input on the range of issues to be addressed. There will be additional comment opportunities; however, input provided early in the development of this action will help the two management bodies identify issues of concern and determine which types of management alternatives should be further developed. The Public Information/Scoping Document provides a broad overview of the issues identified for consideration in the amendment, management approaches that may be considered, and a series of questions to guide public comment on this amendment.

Submitting Comments

The Public Information/Scoping Document is available [HERE](#) or on the Commission's Public Input webpage at <https://asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>. All those interested in the management of summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, and bluefish are encouraged to provide input by **11:59 PM (EST) on March 20, 2025** by participating in public hearings or by providing written comment.

Written comment may be submitted through any of the following methods:

- online via <https://mafmc.knack.com/public-comments#rec-sector-separation-data-collection/>;
- mailed to Dr. Christopher Moore, Executive Director, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, at 800 North State Street, Suite 201, Dover, DE 19901; or

- emailed to Kiley Dancy at kdancy@mafmc.org (Subject line: Recreational Sector Separation and Data Collection).

Public Hearing Schedule

| Date and Hearing Format | State/Agency | Contact |
|--|--|---|
| Tuesday, February 25 <i>Webinar Hearing</i> 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. | New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection <i>The webinar registration link is here, and additional webinar instructions are below.</i> | Joseph Cimino (NJ) 609.748.2020 |
| Wednesday, February 26 <i>Hybrid Hearing</i> 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. | New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation and Connecticut Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection <i>The webinar registration link is here, and additional webinar instructions are below.</i> Hearing Location: New York State Marine Resources Headquarters 123 Kings Park Blvd., Nissequogue River Park Kings Park, NY 11754 | Martin Gary (NY) 631.444.0430 Matthew Gates (CT) 860.876.4393 |
| Thursday, February 27 <i>Hybrid Hearing</i> 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. | Rhode Island Dept. of Environmental Management <i>The virtual Zoom link is here, and additional instructions are below.</i> Hearing Location: University of Rhode Island Bay Campus Corless Auditorium 215 South Ferry Road Narragansett, RI 02882 | Jason McNamee (RI) 401.537.4141 |
| Tuesday, March 4 <i>Webinar Hearing</i> 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. | Delaware Division of Fish and Wildlife, Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources, Potomac River Fisheries Commission, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, and North Carolina Dept. of Environmental Quality <i>The webinar registration link is here, and additional webinar instructions are below.</i> | John Clark (DE) 302.739.9914 Mike Luisi (MD) 410.260.8341 Ron Owens (PRFC) 804.224.7148 Pat Geer (VA) 757.247.2200 Chris Batsavage (NC) 252.241.2995 |
| Wednesday, March 5 <i>Webinar Hearing</i> 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. | Maine Dept. of Marine Resources, New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, and Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries <i>The webinar registration link is here, and additional webinar instructions are below.</i> | Corrin Flora (ME) 207.446.8126 Renee Zobel (NH) 603.868.1095 Nichola Meserve (MA) 978.619.0017 |

Hearing Presentation Recording

For those who cannot attend any in-person or virtual hearings, the Commission will also post a recording of the hearing presentation on the Commission's YouTube page so that stakeholders may watch the presentation and submit comment at any time during the comment process. This recording will be available by late February, with the recording link provided at <https://asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>.

Webinar Instructions

Please note that in order to comment during virtual webinar hearings you will need to use your computer or download the GoTo app for your phone. Those joining by phone only will be limited to listening to the presentation and will not be able to provide input. In those cases, you can send your comments to staff via [email](#) or US mail at any time during the public comment period. To attend the webinar in listen only mode, dial 415.655.0052 and enter access code 724-084-791. If you are unable to participate in your state's scheduled hearing, you are welcome to participate in any of the virtual hearings.

For all virtual hearings (except Rhode Island's), please click [HERE](#) and select the hearing(s) you plan to attend from the dropdown menu to register for a public hearing webinar. Hearings will be held via GoToWebinar, and you can join the webinar from your computer, tablet or smartphone. If you are new to GoToWebinar, you can download the software by ([clicking here](#)) or via the App store under GoTo. We recommend you register for the hearing well in advance of the hearing since GoToWebinar will provide you with a link to test your device's compatibility with the webinar. If you find your device is not compatible, please contact the Commission at info@asmfc.org (subject line: GoToWebinar help) and we will try to get you connected. We also strongly encourage participants to **use the computer voice over internet protocol (VoIP)** so you can ask questions and provide input at the hearing.

For virtual participation at the hybrid Rhode Island public hearing, the [Zoom meeting link is available here](#). The Meeting ID is 861 5076 1946 and the Passcode is 483668; if calling in dial 646-931-3860.

For more information, please contact Tracey Bauer, ASMFC Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at tbauer@asmfc.org.