



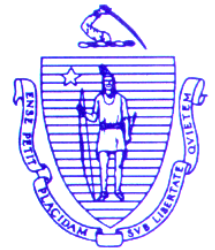
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Marine Fisheries Advisory

2014 MASSACHUSETTS RECREATIONAL FLUKE, SCUP, AND BLACK SEA BASS LIMITS APPROVED BY ASMFC

Massachusetts' 2014 recreational fishing regulations for fluke, scup, and black sea bass have been approved by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). Due to the late timing of this approval, the Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*), pending consent of the Massachusetts Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission, will implement these regulations on an emergency basis.

Fluke

For 2014, the ASMFC adopted a regional approach for managing the coast's recreational fluke fisheries with the intent of providing more equity in harvest opportunities among states. While initially grouped with Rhode Island and facing a size limit increase, *Marine Fisheries* was able to successfully lobby for Massachusetts to be treated as its own region enabling status quo regulations for 2014.

For 2014 the following recreational limits will apply for **fluke**:

Mode	Season	Bag Limit	Minimum Size
Private Angler	May 22 – September 30	5 fish	16 inches
For-Hire	May 22 – September 30	5 fish	16 inches

Scup

The ASMFC manages scup on a regional basis, with the states from Massachusetts through New York comprising one region. While the region's recreational harvest target for 2014 is reduced from 2013, no tightening of the regulations is required as the 2013 harvest is below the 2014 target. Each state in the region is implementing status quo regulations, meaning the regulatory liberalizations implemented last year will be maintained.

For 2014, the following recreational limits will apply for **scup**:

Mode	Season	Bag Limit	Minimum Size
Private Angler	May 1 – December 31	30 fish (150 fish vessel maximum)	10 inches
For-Hire Bonus	May 1 – June 30	45 fish	10 inches
For-Hire Regular	July 1 – December 31	30 fish	10 inches

Black Sea Bass

Recreational black sea bass fisheries will continue to be managed under a regional approach in 2014, with Massachusetts through New Jersey comprising the northernmost region. With the region's 2013 harvest exceeding its 2014 target, rules must be revised to moderately reduce harvest in 2014.

Similar to last year, Massachusetts will have one set of regulations for private anglers and for-hire clients, while also providing an opportunity for interested for-hire vessel operators to opt into a special access program under which their clients can harvest more fish in the fall at the expense of a reduced open season for their vessel. For-hire vessel operators must decide before the start of the season whether they want to fish under the standard regulations OR the special access program regulations.

For the vast majority of fishery participants, *Marine Fisheries* has selected regulations that will account for the required harvest reduction through a 52-day shortening of the season (primarily in September and October) while at the same time allowing for a doubling of the bag limit. Because a small number of for-hire businesses rely on attracting out-of-state clients in the fall, the special access program will offer a 20-fish bag limit throughout September provided participating vessels adhere to a June through August closed season.

For 2014 the following recreational limits will apply for **black sea bass**:

Mode	Season	Bag Limit	Minimum Size
Private Angler	May 17 – September 15	8 fish	14 inches
For-Hire	May 17 – September 15	8 fish	14 inches
For-Hire Special Access Program (LOA required*)	May 17 – May 31	8 fish	14 inches
	September 1 – September 30	20 fish	14 inches

* To participate in the For-Hire Special Access Black Sea Bass Fishery, permit holders must apply for a Letter of Authorization (LOA) from *Marine Fisheries* by no later than May 1, 2014. Click www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dfg/dmf/commercialfishing/2014-bsb-for-hire-loa-application.pdf to see the conditions that will apply and to request an LOA.

A subsequent public hearing and comment period will be announced at a later date. For further information, contact *Marine Fisheries* at 617-626-1520 or visit our website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.