



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## Division of Marine Fisheries

(617) 626-1520 | [www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries)



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September 3, 2024

### Marine Fisheries Advisory

#### **ASMFC Public Hearings on Summer Flounder Draft Addendum XXXV (Changes to Commercial Trawl Mesh Exemption Programs)**

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) is seeking public comment on Draft Addendum XXXV to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass. The Draft Addendum considers changes to two exemptions to the summer flounder commercial minimum mesh size requirements: the Small Mesh Exemption Program (SMEP) and the flynet exemption.

Two public hearings have been scheduled: one for the New England and Mid-Atlantic states (MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ) and one for the more southern states (MD, VA, NC). Both hearings will be conducted via webinar. Regardless of your state of residence, you are welcome to participate in either virtual hearing. The public hearing details follow:

Date/Hearing Format	State/Agency	Contact
<b>Monday, September 16</b> <b>Webinar Hearing</b> <b>6:00 – 8:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, Rhode Island Dept. of Environmental Management, Connecticut Dept. of Energy &amp; Environmental Protection, New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation, New Jersey Dept. of Environmental Protection</b>  <i>The <a href="#">webinar registration link is available here</a>, and additional webinar instructions are below.</i>	<a href="#">Nichola Meserve (MA)</a> 978.619.0017  <a href="#">Corinne Truesdale (RI)</a> 401.423.1939  <a href="#">Matthew Gates (CT)</a> 860.876.4393  <a href="#">John Maniscalco (NY)</a> 631.444.0437  <a href="#">Joseph Cimino (NJ)</a> 609.748.2020
<b>Tuesday, September 17</b> <b>Webinar Hearing</b> <b>6:00 – 8:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources, Virginia Marine Resources Commission, North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries</b>  <i>The <a href="#">webinar registration link is available here</a>, and additional webinar instructions are below.</i>	<a href="#">Mike Luisi (MD)</a> 443.758.6547  <a href="#">Pat Geer (VA)</a> 757.247.2236  <a href="#">Chris Batsavage (NC)</a> 252.241.2995

Specifically, the Draft Addendum considers moving the western boundary of the SMEP approximately five miles westward, changes to the review methodology of the SMEP, and updates to the definition of a flynet under the flynet exemption. These changes are being considered following industry feedback indicating the SMEP has become an important program to maintain the economic viability of businesses and the definition of a flynet should be updated to reflect modern gear configurations and use patterns. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council is considering an identical set of options through a framework action.

### **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 914.614.3221 and enter access code 824-383-088. 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, 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](mailto: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.

### **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 early September, with the recording link provided at <https://asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>.

### **Submitting Comments**

The Draft Addendum is available at [https://asmfc.org/uploads/file/66d08c06SummerFlounderDraftAddendumXXXV\\_PublicComment.pdf](https://asmfc.org/uploads/file/66d08c06SummerFlounderDraftAddendumXXXV_PublicComment.pdf) 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 are encouraged to provide input either by participating in public hearings, which will be conducted via webinar, or providing written comment. Public comment will be accepted until **11:59 PM (EST) on September 26, 2024** and should be sent to Chelsea Tuohy, FMP Coordinator, at 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, Virginia 22201; or at [comments@asmfc.org](mailto:comments@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Summer Flounder Draft Addendum XXXV). For more information, please contact Chelsea Tuohy at [ctuohy@asmfc.org](mailto:ctuohy@asmfc.org).