



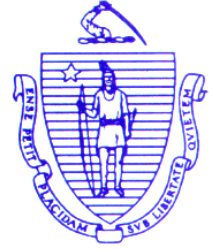
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# *Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

## **Division of Marine Fisheries**

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**Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.**  
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**Mary B. Griffin**  
*Commissioner*

January 2, 2014

### *Marine Fisheries Advisory*

#### **ASMFC Public Hearing on 2014 Fluke and Black Sea Bass Recreational Fisheries: January 16, 2014**

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The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*) will host an Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) public hearing on Draft Addendum XXV to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass Management Plan. The addendum specifically addresses summer flounder (fluke) and black sea bass recreational management in 2014. The date, time, and location of the hearing are:

#### **January 16, 2014 at 5:00 PM**

Bourne Fire Station #3, Meeting Room

53 Meetinghouse Lane

Sagamore Beach, Massachusetts

Contact: Nichola Meserve (617.626.1531, [nichola.meserve@state.ma.us](mailto:nichola.meserve@state.ma.us))

Regarding fluke, Draft Addendum XXV includes options that allow for management measures by region and the sharing of unused quota – both with the intent of providing more equity in recreational harvest opportunities along the coast. The specific regions being considered are (1) Massachusetts; Rhode Island through New Jersey; Delaware through Virginia; and North Carolina and (2) Massachusetts and Rhode Island; Connecticut through New Jersey; Delaware through Virginia; and North Carolina.

The Draft Addendum was initiated to address a growing concern that current summer flounder management measures (as established under the Fishery Management Plan) are not providing recreational fishermen along the coast with equitable harvest opportunities to the resource. Those measures, involving state-specific recreational management measures under conservation equivalency are increasingly being viewed as problematic due to several factors. These factors include: reliance upon recreational harvest estimates for a single year (1998) as the basis for individual state targets; a change in the abundance of the resource; and changes in the socio-economic characteristics of the fishery. The impact of the management program seemed to affect New York the most, with a 21” size limit (by 2009) and a short season including mid-season closure. In 2013, with a fully recovered stock, New York’s minimum size (19”) was at least one inch higher than any other state, one and a half inches higher than its bordering states.

The Draft Addendum proposes a more flexible and equitable conservation approach that allows the management program to adjust to past, current, and future changes to the resource and the fishery. The biological characteristics of the summer flounder have changed with the restoration of this stock. In particular, there has been a substantial expansion in the size and age composition, with greater overall abundance and increased numbers of larger fish.

Regarding black sea bass, the Draft Addendum proposes two options for the 2014 recreational fishery: (1) coastwide measures (currently proposed at 13” TL minimum size, a 5-fish possession limit, and a season

from June 1 to September 30) or (2) the continued use of management measures by northern (MA – NJ) and southern (DE – NC) regions. The regional management approach has been used since 2011 and offers some advantages over coastwide regulations, which can disproportionately impact states within the management unit. Specifically, regional measures can address geographic differences in the stock (size, abundance, and seasonality) while maintaining the consistent application of management measures by neighboring states.

For full details, refer to Draft Addendum XXV to the Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Management Plan for Public Comment, available via the Commission's website on the Public Input page at: <http://www.asmfc.org/about-us/public-input>.

Written public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM (EST) on January 24, 2014** and should be forwarded to Kirby Rootes-Murdy, Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite 200 A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (fax) or via email at [krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Draft Addendum XXV).