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*Director*

# *Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

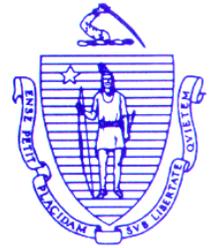
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December 23, 2015

*Marine Fisheries Advisory*

### **ASMFC Public Hearing on Recreational Fluke & Black Sea Bass Management: January 14**

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The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) is seeking public comment on Draft Addendum XXVII to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass. Draft Addendum XXVII proposes regional management approaches for the 2016 summer flounder (fluke) and black sea bass recreational fisheries. The full schedule of public hearings (Massachusetts through Virginia) is available via the ASMFC [website](#). The details of the Massachusetts hearing are as follows:

**Thursday, January 14, 2016 at 4:30 PM**

Massachusetts Maritime Academy

101 Academy Drive

Buzzards Bay, MA 02532

(\*Note: The public hearing will be followed by a [For-Hire Recreational Fisheries Forum](#) at 6:00 PM. Follow the link for more information.)

For fluke, Draft Addendum XXVII considers extending the use of regional management approaches for the 2016 recreational fishery, including an option that would allow for a Delaware Bay specific region. In 2014 and 2015, the ASMFC Management Board shifted away from the use of state-by-state harvest targets to the regional strategy because the state-by-state harvest targets had created difficulties for some states as harvest overages occurred due largely to state shares and fishing limits not reflecting local summer flounder abundance and its availability to recreational fishermen. The management regions were: 1) Massachusetts; 2) Rhode Island; 3) Connecticut–New Jersey; 4) Delaware–Virginia; and 5) North Carolina. States within a region must implement the same minimum size, possession limit, and season length. Under both regional options proposed for 2016, Massachusetts would remain its own region, and based on preliminary data, the state could maintain its 2015 regulations.

For black sea bass, the draft addendum proposes two options for the 2016 recreational fishery: (1) coastwide measures or (2) the continued use of management measures by northern (Massachusetts–New Jersey) and southern regions (Delaware–North Carolina). The “ad hoc” regional management approach has been used since 2011 and offers advantages over coastwide regulations by addressing geographic differences in the stock (size, abundance and seasonality) while maintaining the application of consistent (but not necessarily identical) management measures by neighboring states in a region. Under either option, it is currently estimated (based on preliminary data and projections

of harvest for the remainder of the year) that coastal harvest will need to be reduced by 23% from 2015 in order to achieve the 2016 recreational harvest limit.

Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on Draft Addendum XXVII either by attending a public hearing or providing written comment. The document is available [here](#) and can also be accessed on the Commission website ([www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org)) under Public Input.

Public comment will be accepted until **5:00 PM (EST) on January 21, 2016** and should be forwarded to Kirby Rootes-Murdy, FMP Coordinator, 1050 N. Highland St., Suite A-N, Arlington, VA 22201; 703.842.0741 (FAX) or at [krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Draft Addendum XXVII).

For more information, please contact to Kirby Rootes-Murdy at [krootes-murdy@asmfc.org](mailto:krootes-murdy@asmfc.org) or 703.842.0740; or Nichola Meserve at [nichola.meserve@state.ma.us](mailto:nichola.meserve@state.ma.us) or 617.626.1531.