



Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

NOAA Fisheries, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office, 55 Great Republic Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930

For Information Contact:
Sustainable Fisheries Division
(978) 281 – 9315

<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/>
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Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass **CORRECTED 2015 Recreational Management Measures**

Effective Date: June 19, 2015

We have approved the final 2015 minimum fish size, angler possession limits, and fishing season rules for the summer flounder (fluke), scup (porgies), and black sea bass (sea bass) recreational fisheries. States have already put their rules in place for the season. **The previous bulletin for this action contained an error for the black sea bass season. This bulletin corrects that error.**

We are again implementing “conservation equivalency” for the **summer flounder** fishery. Conservation equivalency means that we have waived the Federal recreational bag limit, minimum fish size, and fishing season, and vessel owners are **subject only to regulations in their state**. Please see **Table 1**, below, for your state’s 2015 recreational management measures.

We are also maintaining the **year-round** open season for recreational **scup** fishing and the minimum fish size is still **9 inches**. We have increased the per person per trip possession limit to **50 scup per person**. Please keep in mind that, if the Federal minimum size, possession limit, and/or season differ from the regulations for the state in which you will be landing, **you must follow the more restrictive regulations**. **Please contact your state for information on your state’s scup regulations.**

For the 2015 **black sea bass** recreational fishery, we are maintaining the minimum fish size of **12.5 inches** and the possession limit of **15 black sea bass per person per trip**. The 2015 Federal open seasons are **May 15-September 21** and **October 22-December 31** in Federal waters. Please keep in mind that, if the Federal minimum size, possession limit, and/or season differ from the regulations for the state in which you will be landing, **you must follow the more restrictive regulations**. Please see **Table 3** below for your state’s black sea bass regulations.

We have also included some important information regarding sea turtles and what you should do if you encounter or entangle a sea turtle on **Page 3**.

If you have additional questions on the recreational management measures after reading this letter, please call the Sustainable Fisheries Division at (978) 281-9315. For questions related to sea turtles, please call the Protected Resources Division at (978) 281-9238.

For small entity compliance guides, this bulletin complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement and Fairness Act of 1996. This notice is authorized by the Regional Administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Greater Atlantic Region.

Table 1: 2015 Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission Approved Conservation Equivalent Recreational Measures for **Summer Flounder**

State of Landing	Minimum Size	Possession Limit	Open Season
Massachusetts	16 inches	5 fish	May 22-September 23
Rhode Island	18 inches	8 fish	May 1-December 31
Connecticut	18 inches	5 fish	May 17-September 21
At 46 designated shore sites	16 inches	5 fish	May 17-September 21
New York	18 inches	5 fish	May 17-September 21
New Jersey	18 inches	5 fish	May 23-September 26
At 1 designated shore site	16 inches	2 fish	May 23-September 26
Delaware	16 inches	4 fish	January 1-December 31
Maryland			
PRFC			
Virginia			
North Carolina	15 inches	6 fish	January 1-December 31

Table 2: 2015 **Federal** Recreational Measures for **Scup**

Remember—the most restrictive measures apply, based on the rules for the state where you land.

Fishery	Minimum Size (Inches)	Possession Limit	Open Season(s)
Scup	9 inches	50 fish	January 1-December 31

Table 3: 2015 **Federal** and Commission Approved State Recreational Measures for **Black Sea Bass**

Remember—the most restrictive measures apply, based on the rules for the state where you land.

State of landing	Fishing Mode	Minimum Size	Possession Limit	Open Season(s)
Federal Waters	All	12.5 inches	15 fish	May 15-September 21 & October 22-December 31
Maine	All	13 inches	10 fish	May 19-September 18
New Hampshire	All	13 inches	10 fish	January 1-December 31
Massachusetts	All	14 inches	8 fish	May 23-August 27
Rhode Island	All	14 inches	1 fish	July 2-August 31
			7 fish	September 1-December 31
Connecticut	All	14 inches	3 fish	June 1-August 31
			5 fish	September 1 - December 31
	Party/Charter Monitoring Program Vessels	14 inches	8 fish	June 21-December 31
New York	All	14 inches	8 fish	July 15-October 31
			10 fish	November 1-December 31
New Jersey	All	12.5 inches	2 fish	July 1-July 31
			15 fish	May 15-June 30 & October 22-December 31
Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina N. of 35°15'N, Cape Hatteras, NC	All	12.5 inches	15 fish	May 15-September 21 & October 22-December 31

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON SEA TURTLES

Sea Turtles and Recreational Hook-and-Line Fishing

Five sea turtle species - green, hawksbill (rare visitor to our region), Kemp's ridley, leatherback, and loggerhead turtles - are found in the U.S. Atlantic Ocean. All of these turtles are threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

When on the water, please keep a watch for sea turtles and aggregations of jellyfish, which are leatherback prey. Sea turtles can be accidentally entangled or hooked in fishing gear. Requirements for handling sea turtles and/or resuscitating comatose turtles can be found at 50 CFR 223.206(d)(1). In addition, follow the recommendations below to reduce injuries if you entangle or hook a sea turtle.

1. First, call your local stranding network responder (http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/stranding/ST%20map/), the **USCG on Channel 16**, or NOAA Fisheries Marine Animal Hotline at **866-755-NOAA(6622)**.
2. Safety First! Keep your hands away from the turtle's mouth and flippers.

While waiting for the responder:

3. Secure the turtle.
 - a. If fishing from a pier or land, use a net or lift by the shell to bring the turtle on the pier or land. DO NOT lift by the hook or by pulling on the line. If the turtle is too large to net or lift, try to walk it to the beach.
 - b. If fishing from a vessel and the turtle is small enough to lift safely, use a dip net or lift by the shell to bring the turtle on board.
4. When you have control of the sea turtle, use blunt scissors or a knife to cut the line. Leave at least 2 ft of line to allow for dehooking by trained responders.
5. Leave the hook in place as removing it could cause more harm.
6. Keep the turtle out of direct sunlight, and cover the shell with a damp towel. If on land, wait for the response team to arrive. If on the water, please follow the instructions you receive from the response team.
7. If you cannot reach the response team and are unable to bring the turtle to shore or on your vessel, cut the line as short as possible before releasing the turtle.
8. When returning a sea turtle to the water, it must be released over the stern of the boat when fishing gear is not in use, the engine gears are in the neutral position, and in areas where it is unlikely to be recaptured or injured by vessels.

Please also report any sea turtles or large whales that are injured, entangled in other gear, stranded on the beach, or floating dead to the USCG on Channel 16 or the NOAA hotline at 866-755-NOAA(6622). For more information, please contact our Protected Resources Division at 978-281-9328. We appreciate all your help!