

Coastal Recreational Fisheries Forum Meeting Summary

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March 27, 2017

Welcome & Introductions

Species Updates

- **Cobia:** The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) is developing a Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) that will complement the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council plan. There will also be a vessel limit. Maryland currently does not have cobia regulations.
- **Red Drum:** A stock assessment was conducted last summer and it has been peer reviewed. The stock is not overfished and overfishing is not occurring. There are anglers who specialize in fishing for red drum.
- **Spot/Croaker:** The ASMFC stock assessments are being worked on and should be ready soon.
- **Striped Bass:** For 2015, we took a 25% reduction along the Atlantic coast. An ASMFC addendum is currently being drafted which may allow a 10% liberalization coastwide.
- **Tautog:** Recent benchmark stock assessment- the Delmarva tautog fishery is its own stock. It is overfished but overfishing is not occurring. Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia have vastly different regulations. All three states are probably not going to have the same rules next year. The group discussed closing the season for May and June to open December. A May closure could be a problem for shore anglers. A party boat captain indicated that he does not target tautog when the creel is two fish. A May 15th closure date was suggested. There may not be many tautogs caught in December. Some reefs in the Chesapeake Bay are starting to be fished for tautog.
- **Black Sea Bass:** There is a new stock assessment for black sea bass indicating that the stock is 2 ½ times higher than previous level. At the February Board meeting states were looking at an 8% reduction based on preliminary landings through Wave 5. Two days after the February meeting, Wave 6 estimates came in tremendously high indicating the need for a 24% reduction. The Board is working on a resolution. NOAA will probably want states to take action now but the northern states decided to do nothing based on the stock assessment. Maryland is outnumbered by states up north where they can fish for black sea bass in state waters whereas our fishery is in Federal waters.
- **Summer Flounder:** The Board chose Option 5 for the recreational reduction. Option 5 requires all states to increase the minimum size by 1" and have no more than a four fish creel limit. NOAA has to approve this plan. Massachusetts and Rhode Island want to deviate from Option 5 so that they can have a higher creel limit. The Board will be discussing those

proposals soon. New Jersey does not want to comply with Option 5 and its fishery may get shut down.

Topics from You

- Meeting Times – Meeting times have been acceptable for those in attendance.
- Artificial Reefs - A constituent recommended that the state spend more money on artificial reefs.

FYI

- Changes to blue crab net ring size are effective on 5/27.
- Dusky Shark Amendment 5b to be published on March 31, 2017.
- Tilefish will be discussed at the next Council meeting.
- The next ASMFC Meeting is May 9th-11th.

Action Items

Follow up to March 2017 Forum:

- How do you want to proceed with scheduling the Recreational Forum meeting time?
- Continue to provide croaker/spot stock assessment updates until the results are finalized.

Follow up to October 2016 Forum:

- Assigned Steve to make a summer flounder hook recommendation for the 2018 Fishing and Crabbing Guide.