



2019 Recreational Fishing Limits: Black Sea Bass, Scup and Fluke

The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) has filed emergency regulations to revise the 2019 recreational fishing limits for black sea bass and scup, while maintaining status quo rules for fluke, per recent interstate management decisions. The emergency regulations take effect on **April 13**. This date is relevant to the season start for scup this year.

Fishery	Open Season	Possession Limit*	Minimum Size
Black Sea Bass	May 18–September 8	5 fish	15"
Scup, Private Vessel & Shore	April 13–December 31	30 fish (150 fish/vessel maximum)	9"
Scup, For-Hire Vessels	April 13–April 30	30 fish	9"
	May 1–June 30	50 fish	
	July 1–December 31	30 fish	
Fluke	May 23–October 9	5 fish	17"

* Possession limits are per person per day unless otherwise noted.

Black Sea Bass: The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) approved status quo regulations along the coast based on a low risk of such measures exceeding the 2019 recreational

harvest limit of 3.66 million pounds. DMF was granted approval to begin MA's season one day earlier in May to maintain a Saturday opening date; however, the resulting projected increase in harvest must be offset by closing the fishery four days earlier in September.

Scup: The northern region of MA–NY is afforded additional harvest opportunities in 2019 to achieve the coastwide harvest limit of 7.37 million pounds. Our region selected to eliminate the closed season of January–April, and increase the possession limit aboard for-hire vessels during the “bonus season” (May–June in MA) by 5 fish, complementing the federal waters limit of 50 fish. Note that April 13 is the effective opening date for 2019; status quo measures in 2020 would mean a January 1 opening. Extending the for-hire bonus season for an additional two months was contemplated but decided against for reasons of regulatory stability and conservation of non-target species.

Fluke (Summer Flounder): The ASMFC approved status quo management for 2019. While the coastwide recreational harvest limit is being increased to 7.69 million pounds based on the 2018 benchmark stock assessment (up from 4.42 million pounds in 2018), revised recreational catch estimates indicate the fishery is already operating near this level. Less restrictive measures could risk the fishery exceeding the 2019 harvest limit.

For more information, please contact DMF at 617-626-1520.

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