

Project-specific management of Atlantic scup, summer flounder and black sea bass trawl fishery, New Jersey, FAO 21 (Statistical zones: 625, 626, 621, 615, 613, 537)

The project-specific management conditions have been worked out from suggestions of the online expert survey, October 2025.

1. Expert meeting

1.1 Besides the general regulations for sustainable fishery listed in Part B, project-specific management conditions are imposed on each fishery project. Taken together with the regulations under B. 2.-4., these special conditions constitute a catalogue of measures to be adopted in the management plan and quality assurance system of the project. The conditions are the result of an expert survey of each fishery project to be performed. Naturland decides whether to accept the list of experts proposed either by the fishery project or a third party and can, where justified, reject the list or ask for changes to be made. The experts on the list should cover the following fields:

- scientific institutions which deal with the respective type of fishery (primarily for current information on the status of the stock and on the aquatic ecosystem)*
- fishing authorities (legal requirements, national and international development aims)*
- NGOs (social and ecological aspects)*
- organisations from the fishing and/or processing industries (technical, social and economic aspects).*

1.2 To ensure that the regulations compiled in the project-specific management conditions are kept up to date, each expert survey is performed every four years at the minimum. In principle, the fishery project bears responsibility for the expert survey being performed according to schedule. This also holds true for the case that the project has to supply the experts with pertinent data for them to be able to assess the situation of a fishery. The project-specific management conditions for each individual fishery project must be approved by Naturland.

source: Naturland Standards for Sustainable Capture Fishery; Part B

The following topics include the project specific management conditions:

1.2. The next expert survey should take place in 2029 the latest.

The following topics will be discussed:

- Observation of bycatch of juvenile scup
- Stock status of major bycatch species (Spiny dogfish, Northern Sea robin, Little skate, Winter skate).
- Climate impact on the stocks

2. Ecology



2.1 The project performs its fishing activities in such a way that integrity of the ecosystem is maintained long-term, concerning both the stocks of the economically relevant species as well as the other components of the ecosystem.

2.2 Subject of the evaluation is the geographical catchment area of the respective fishery project or the project's share in the total exploitation of a certain species.

2.3 In the case of species which only occur temporarily in the catchment area of the project, or which do not spend their whole life cycle there, an evaluation is made of whether the management form of the project were compatible with maintaining the total stock volume if this management form were adopted by all the enterprises involved in fishing this species in this way (exemplary character).

2.4 Naturland reserves the right not to perform certification or to suspend the procedure if management of the fishery is not guided by the concept of the maximum sustainable yield (MSY), i. e. the fishing mortality rate must be below F_{msy} ($F < F_{msy}$) and the biomass of the spawning stock (SSB) must be greater than or equal to $MSY B_{trigger}$ ($SSB \geq MSY B_{trigger}$). Should no reference values be available for certain species, then as an alternative certification may be performed on the basis of the life span and manner of reproduction.

2.5 If no exclusively used geographic area can be attributed to the project (e.g. in deep-sea fishery), the evaluation is made based not only on the fishing practices of the project but also on the total situation of the stocks in question.

2.6 Practices which are generally deemed as detrimental or critical from an ecological point of view are prohibited. These include the following regulations in addition to the project-specific management conditions defined:

- catching marine mammals and ocean turtles
- catching sharks for their fins ("finning")
- the use of poisons and explosives in fishing
- damage to coral reefs (including cold-water corals)
- beam trawl fishing as well as demersal trawling on highly structured sea beds
- demersal trawling without suitable escape hatches to keep bycatches to a minimum.

2.7 The project-specific management conditions govern the following in particular:

- minimum size and maximum quantities
- equipment and techniques employed
- close seasons and sanctuaries
- avoidance or minimization of bycatches
- other measures which help to protect the aquatic ecosystem and/or individual species (e.g. protection of breeding colonies)
- protocols for monitoring of relevant pollutants, determination of specific alert/reporting values and threshold values.

source: Naturland Standards for Sustainable Capture Fishery; Par

The following topics include project specific management conditions:

2.4. Northeast Fisheries Science Center of NOAA do the regular stock assessment and after the stock assessments conducted by the Science Center go to the Science and Statistical Committees of the MidAtlantic Fishery Management Council to use in setting catch advice for the Council. According to the latest report, The Atlantic scup, summer flounder and black sea bass were not overfished, and overfishing was not occurring in 2024.

[Scup: Commercial Fishing | NOAA Fisheries](#)



[Summer Flounder: Commercial Fishing | NOAA Fisheries](#)

[Black Sea Bass | NOAA Fisheries](#)

The spawning biomass (SBB) for Atlantic scup, summer flounder and black sea bass in the designed catching areas is at or above the biomass that would produce maximum sustainable yield (SSBMSY).

2.7.1 The restrictions on the Commercial Annual Catch Limit (ACL) are defined by Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council, on advice from its Scientific and Statistical Committee based on science from NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center.

The Commercial Annual Catch Limit (ACL) for Atlantic scup in FAO 21 is defined in total at 26.85 mlb in 2025. The commercial quota for Atlantic scup in FAO 21 is defined at 19.54 million lb in 2025

The Commercial Annual Catch Limit (ACL) for summer flounder in FAO 21 is defined in total at 10.62 in 2025. The commercial quota for summer flounder in FAO 21 is defined at 8.79 million lb in 2025.

The Commercial Annual Catch Limit (ACL) for black seabass in FAO 21 is defined in total at 7.50 in 2025. The commercial quota for black seabass in FAO 21 is defined at 6 million lb in 2025. The Commercial Annual Catch Limit (ACL) for black seabass in FAO 21 is defined in total at 7.50 in 2025. The commercial quota for black seabass in FAO 21 is defined at 6 million lb in 2025.

The fishery must comply with the 2026 quota once the updated data are published by the Council's Scientific and Statistical Committee.

2.7.2 In case the stock of spiny dogfish, little skate and winter skate in FAO 21 is overfished or subject to overfishing the part of these species shall not exceed 10 % in the total annual catch.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/summer-flounder>

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/black-sea-bass> [Black Sea Bass - Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#)

[Spiny Dogfish FMP](#)

[Northeast Skate Complex: Science | NOAA Fisheries](#)

2.7.3 The fishery is carried out exclusively with otter trawls. Fishing trips shall take no longer than 3 days.

2.7.4 The minimum mesh size used in the trawl fishery is 5.5 inches for scup and summer flounder, and 4.5 inches for black sea bass. The mesh shape is diamond.

2.7.5 The fishermen avoid the marine protected areas and respect the spatiotemporal closures.

2.7.6 The fishermen avoid sensitive areas that overlap with deep-sea coral regions.

[Deep Sea Corals Amendment \(Amendment 16 to the Mackerel, Squid, Butterfish FMP\) — Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council](#)

[Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2 - Library - NEFMC](#)

Fishermen respect areas within the U.S. EEZ where fishing is prohibited.

<https://www.fisherycouncils.org/area-based-management>.

All fishing operations must comply with the regulations established for the Scup Gear Restricted Areas (GRAs), the Tilefish Gear Restricted Areas (GRAs).



[Tilefish: Commercial Fishing | NOAA Fisheries](#)

[Gulf of Maine-Georges Bank Regulated Mesh Areas | NOAA Fisheries](#)

Fishery must use Turtle Excluder Device (TED) as detailed in 50 CFR part 223, while fishing within Summer Flounder Fishery Sea Turtle Protection Area.

[Summer Flounder Sea Turtle Protection Area Map and GIS Data | NOAA Fisheries](#)

The fishery must register in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program.

[Marine Mammal Authorization Program](#)

2.7.7 Each landing of the fish is controlled and documented by the fishing authorities.

All federally permitted scup vessels are required to submit electronic Vessel Trip Reports (VTR) to the federal government.

2.7.8 Bycatch of endangered species and marine mammals (IUCN Red list/ETP – endangered, threatened, protected) is very uncommon. ETP species caught shall be documented and released alive and carefully.

2.7.9 Scientists and observers have permission to accompany the fishing vessels for research purposes.

2.7.10 Vessels are also required to take on board NOAA Fisheries Observers, which personnel collect biological data and conduct regulatory compliance also.

2.7.11 Loss of gears shall not occur to any extent. Vessels must be equipped with GPS, electronic plotters, and net sensors that allow to know the seafloor type and slope. Therefore, a lost gear can be located and shall be retrieved. Loss of gear must be documented and recovered. If not, a detailed explanation must be provided.

2.7.12 All vessels shall be equipped with the information of marine litter for United States Coast Guard inspection. Fishermen shall adhere to a waste management plan that emphasizes waste prevention and includes the collection of ocean litter during fishing trips.

2.7.13 The individual vessel size and the horsepower are limited by NOAA Fisheries through the vessel's permit. The maximum vessel size is 165 feet (50 m) in length and the maximum horsepower is 2000.

2.7.13.a The operator shall fully cooperate with the auditor and ensure that all necessary conditions are in place for the audit to be conducted effectively.

2.7.13.b Vessel auditing shall be carried out in accordance with the inspection guidelines established for the Atlantic Scup, Summer Flounder, and Black Sea Bass Trawl Fishery, New Jersey (FAO 21). See Appendix II.

2.7.14 The fuel used is Diesel.

2.7.15 The protocol for monitoring relevant environmental pollutants in the final product is presented in Table I. The respective processor is required to conduct the prescribed analyses and submit the corresponding analysis report when applying for recertification.

Table I Analytical protocol

Parameter	Interval	Alarm value	Limit value	Limit of detection
<i>Example</i>	<i>annually</i>	<i>xx mg/kg</i>	<i>xx mg/kg</i>	<i>xx mg/kg</i>
Heavy metals:				
Cadmium (Cd)	annually	0,025 mg/kg	0,05 mg/kg	0,005 mg/kg
Lead (Pb)	annually	0,15 mg/kg	0,3 mg/kg	0,01 mg/kg
Mercury (Hg)	annually	0,25 mg/kg	0,5 mg/kg	0,01 mg/kg
Dioxins:				
Sum of dioxins (WHO-PCDD/F-TEQ)	annually	1,75 pg/g	3,5 pg/g	0,5 pg/g
Sum of dioxins & dioxin like PCBs (WHO PCDD/F-PCB/TEQ)	annually	3,25 pg/g	6,5 pg/g	0,5 pg/g
Sum of PCB28, PCB52, PCB101, PCB138, PCB 153 and PCB 180	annually	37,25 ng/g	75 ng/g	-
Microbiology:				
Total bacterial count	annually	5x10 ⁶ CFU/g	10 x 10 ⁶ CFU/g	< 10 ² CFU/g
Listeria monocytogenes	annually	-	detected in 25 g	-
Salmonella	annually	-	detected in 25 g	-
Other:				
Radiation	annually	50 Bq/kg	100 Bq/kg	3 Bq/kg
Histamine	annually	100 mg/kg	200 mg/kg	5 mg/kg
TBT	annually	0,01 mg/kg	0,01 mg/kg	0,01 mg/kg
Please add any further testing parameters below, such as regionally				

3. Social and economic sustainability of the fishery

3.1 Naturland's standards governing social responsibility apply (ref. A.III. of these standards).

3.2 In addition, allowances have to be made for the situation of many fishermen in the developing countries. Fishery projects (resp. the processors or exporters of the fishery produce) bears responsibility not only for the fishermen to meet with fair working conditions (ref. A. III), but also for adequate living conditions out of working hours. Depending on socio-economic circumstances, those responsible must introduce the requisite measures in a suitable manner. These include especially:

- adequate board and lodging*
- access to banking and insurance services*
- health care*
- schooling for the children*
- transport possibilities*

This is especially applicable if the fishermen and -women are not capable of fulfilling these basic needs from the sale of their products. This is the case, for example, when there is a glut or where seasonal yields fluctuate dramatically, and in cases of over-dependence on fishing as the sole source of income.

3.3 The project-specific management conditions govern, in particular:

- special social aspects, particularly in relation to the situation in developing countries*
- measures designed to avoid conflicts with other users of the resources*

source: Naturland Standards for Sustainable Capture Fishery; Part B

The following topics include project specific management conditions:



3.3.1 All fishermen are either self-employed or employed by Cape clam Inc, Cape Trawlers Inc, and Top Fish LLC receive a defined share of the catch. All workers employed by the companies must receive at least the national minimum wage.

3.3.2 The fishermen follow a code of conduct and are regularly instructed in safety issues.

3.3.3 Lund's Fisheries.Inc engages with the local chamber of commerce supporting projects of interest to the historic fishing community of Cape May.

4. Legal framework and management

4.1 Fishing is performed in compliance with national and international law. The fishery project has to be able to produce the corresponding documents and proof in full and freshly updated.

4.2 The fishery project (or the processor or exporter of the fishing produce) is responsible for its staff and workers being familiar with the contents of these standards. Appropriate training sessions and material have to be provided to guarantee that the catalogue of measures is complied with.

Part B.; Regulations for sustainable capture fishery

Naturland Standards for Sustainable Capture Fishery 05/2017 page 15 of 15

4.3 The management of the fishery project must be able to prove that the requirements laid down in the standards and the project-specific management conditions are implemented systematically, effectively and promptly at every level. This proof includes:

- consistent records and analysis of the catch data*
- feedback between the current catch data and the fishing practice in place*
- knowledge of current national and international regulations and fulfilment of the duties arising therefrom*
- establishment of mechanisms guaranteeing regular communication between the project and the fishermen with regard to social matters*
- existence of and compliance with a development plan (e.g. for deficient issues)*

4.4 The project-specific management conditions govern in particular:

- obligatory documentation requirements and internal control system.*

source: Naturland Standards for Sustainable Capture Fishery; Part B

The following topics include project specific management conditions:

4.1 A central fishing vessel registry is maintained; only registered vessels that have been granted a fishing license may engage in commercial fishing.

4.2.1 Staff and workers are familiar with the Naturland standards. Training and material supporting the catalogue of measures have been provided.

4.3 Before embarking on a fishing trip, the vessel's operators must ensure that the vessel has quota registered which suffices for the expected catch.

4.4.1 The fish can be traced back to the individual vessel and fishing gear by time and catch area.

4.4.2 Each landing is controlled and weighed in the harbor. Recording of vessel catch quotas and catches are done by the Fisheries Authority.



Appendix:I

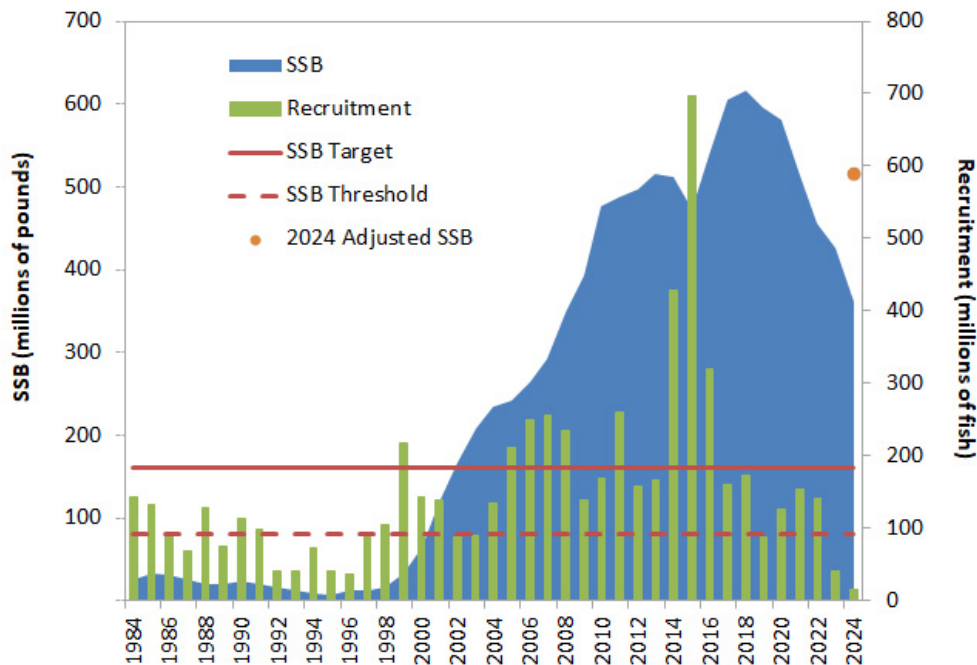
2025 Catch Limits	Scup	Black Sea Bass	Summer Flounder	Bluefish
Acceptable Biological Catch (ABC)	41.31	16.66	19.32	21.83
Commercial ACL = Commercial Annual Catch Target (ACT)	26.85	7.50	10.62	3.06
Commercial Quota	19.54	6.00	8.79	3.03
Recreational ACL = ACT	14.46	9.16	8.69	18.78
Recreational Harvest Limit	12.31	6.27	6.35	15.70

NOAA Fisheries Announces Final 2025 Specifications for the Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass, and Bluefish Fisheries

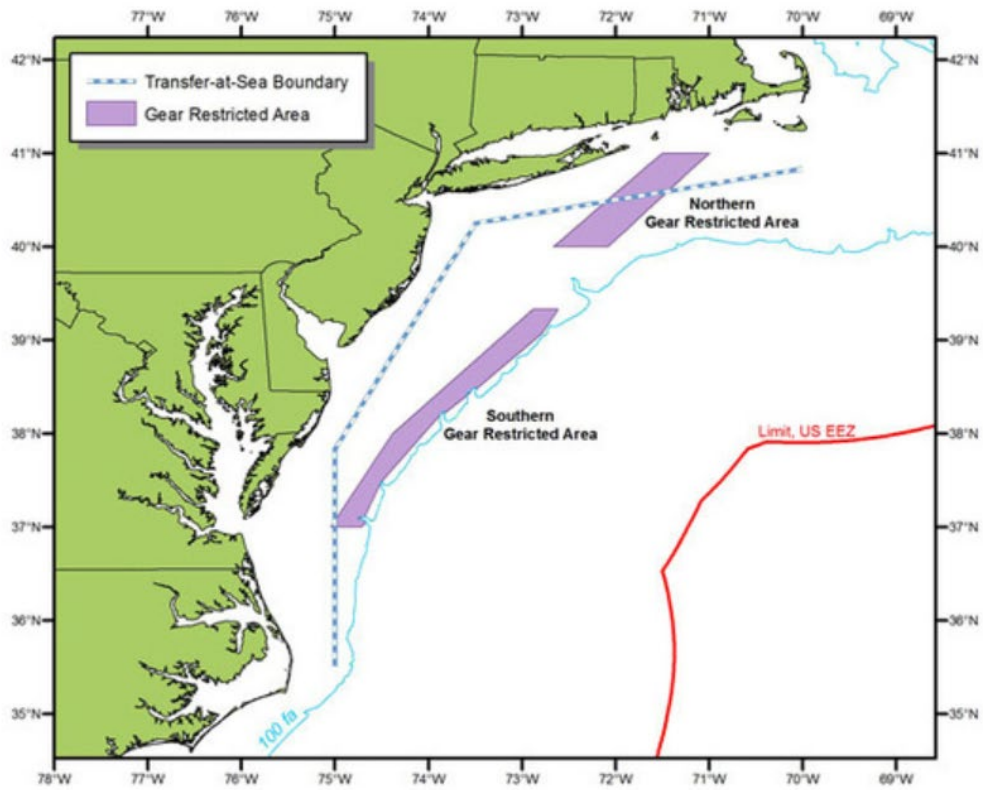
[2025 Specifications for the Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass, and Bluefish Fisheries | NOAA Fisheries](#)

Scup Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB) and Recruitment

Source: Northeast Fisheries Science Center, 2025



Note: 2024 SSB was adjusted for a retrospective pattern with both the unadjusted and adjusted values shown above.



[Scup: Commercial Fishing | NOAA Fisheries](#)

Table 9: Percent of non-target species caught in observed trawls where scup made up at least 75% of the observed landings, 2019-2023. Only those non-target species comprising at least 2% of the aggregate catch are listed.

Species	% of total catch on scup observed directed trips, 2019-2023 ^a
DOG FISH, SPINY	8.0%
SEA ROBIN, NORTHERN	3.7%
SKATE, LITTLE	3.3%
FLOUNDER, SUMMER (FLUKE)	2.6%
SEA BASS, BLACK	2.5%

^a Percentages shown are aggregate totals over 2019-2023 and do not reflect the percentages of non-target species caught on individual trips. This analysis describes only observed trips and has not been expanded to the fishery as a whole.

[2025 Scup Fishery Information](#)



Appendix:II

1. Inspection Guidelines Atlantic scup, summer flounder and black sea bass trawl fishery, New Jersey

1. Physical inspection requirements:

1.1 Trawl Fishery:

During the first inspection in 2026, one vessel each from Cape clam Inc, Cape Trawlers Inc, and Top Fish LLC must be inspected at the harbour. Auditor need not to accompany any fishing trip in the 2026 inspection.

From second certification year, 2027 onwards, one vessel each from Cape clam Inc, Cape Trawlers Inc, and Top Fish LLC must be inspected at the harbour.

It must be ensured that each year, a different vessel from each legal entity is inspected. From the second year of inspection, 2027 onwards, every two years, the auditor must accompany a fishing trip.

2. Video Submission Requirements:

- A video must be submitted for all vessels involving trawl fisheries yearly. The details of the video content are outlined below.
- The video shall capture the entire fishing process, including:
 - Initiation of the fishing process (Dropping of the gear)
 - End of the fishing process (Hauling in the net)
 - Unloading the net
 - any fish processing steps (*if relevant*)

3. Employee Facility and Vessel Condition:

- In addition, videos or pictures of the employee's facilities (e.g.: cabins, bathrooms, canteen and safety equipments) within the vessels are required. This applies to every vessel involved in both the trap and trawl fisheries for the existing equipment.
- The inspection body may request further video or photographic material if required.