

The Watch

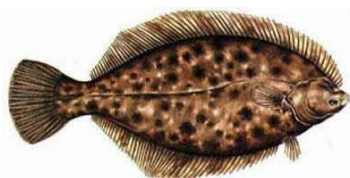
George Allen
Chairman



The RISAA Legislative Committee's mission is to provide, in partnership with the RISAA Affiliated Clubs, a forum for improving the knowledge and understanding of fishery related issues that affect the fishermen of Rhode Island and other New England states. An informed RISAA membership encourages involvement and advocacy. The Legislative Committee will strive to advocate responsible fishery decisions to the appropriate management bodies.

ASMFC approves Addendum 1 to initiate stock rebuilding of inshore stocks of winter flounder

A major step has been taken by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) to reduce the harvest of inshore stocks of winter flounder for both the Gulf of Maine and Southern New England/Mid-Atlantic (SNE/MA) inshore stocks of winter flounder.



Winter Flounder

A 2008 winter flounder assessment estimated the SNE/MA stock was at 9% of the target biomass. As the result of this assessment, NOAA instituted an interim rule

achieve a 50% reduction in harvest, while the 50 pound commercial possession limit is estimated to achieve a 65% reduction.

Since RI has had a complete closure of Narragansett Bay for several

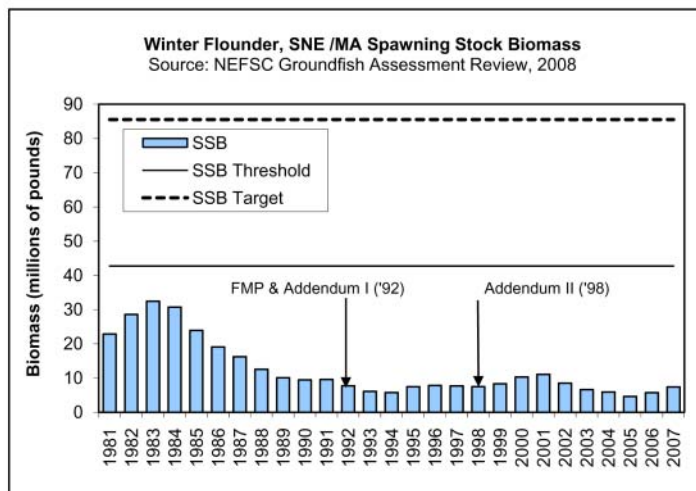


Juvenile winter flounder

in federal waters that prohibits the possession (100% closure) of winter flounder for one year, from May 1, 2009 to May 1, 2010. With bycatch discard, NOAA expects a 62% reduction in winter flounder mortality.

Following the lead of NOAA, the ASMFC has approved a similar reduction plan for state waters. The Addendum establishes a **2 fish recreational bag limit** with the current 12" size limit and seasons maintained.

The 2 fish rec limit will



According to the 2008 Assessment Report, the SNE/MA stock is only at 9% of the target biomass

years, the 2 fish bag limit may not apply to the salt ponds. This will be resolved in the near term.

A 50 pound possession limit was also established for non-federally permitted commercial fishermen.

Both measures will allow for consistent application of management measures in state water fisheries and are intended to complement the federal interim rule which prohibits any take of winter flounder from offshore waters.

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