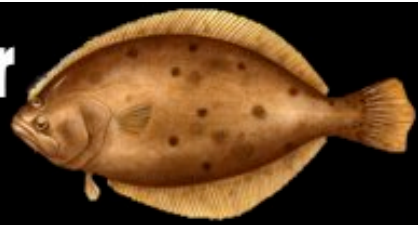


Save the Summer Flounder Fishery Fund



We seek to safeguard and improve fishing access to summer flounder, for those who enjoy it and to ensure the survival of those who depend on it, through scientific and legislative means.

Save the Summer Flounder Fishery Fund Applauds 2011 Summer Flounder Quota Increase – Looks to the Future

An 87% increase in quota since 2009 for every East Coast state and the relaxation of regulations are a direct result of SSFFF-funded research!

Three years ago, faced with the almost certain prospect of, in the words of then National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Director Bill Hogarth, "...forgoing any 2009 recreational fishery..." **Save the Summer Flounder Fishery Fund** was founded with the singular mission of safeguarding and maintaining the public's access to the summer flounder fishery.

"Increases in the summer flounder quota for the third consecutive year are finally leading to coastwide improvements in regulations. The key to the recent quota increases has been comprehensive stock assessment information derived from independent scientific studies commissioned and fully funded by the SSFFF," said Greg Hueth of the SSFFF Board of Directors and president of the Shark River Surf Anglers.

The hiring of fisheries biologist Dr. Mark Maunder, an internationally recognized specialist in stock assessments and the computer models they use, brought to the summer flounder population debate the newest scientific data available. Dr Maunder's comprehensive study investigated the natural mortality and recruitment of summer flounder and how recruitments changed when new evidence of population composition was brought to light. His work was subsequently peer-reviewed and accepted by NMFS as the best and most updated available science on the summer flounder stock.

This landmark series of events is the first time that a scientific research initiative -- one wholly funded by recreational anglers -- has been accepted and incorporated into the regulatory process, and is a direct and tangible result of SSFFF intervention and the generosity of the sport fishing community that stepped up to pay for this project! Summer flounder stocks are currently estimated to be the largest ever recorded since such measurements began some 40 years ago.

"Instead of facing a complete closure of the recreational fishery, (an almost certain outcome before the inception of SSFFF), the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council's (MAFMC) 30 percent increase in quota for 2011 is a continued sign of the benefit of having accurate scientific information. This quota increase yielded a net *87 percent increase in quota* since 2009, a tremendous success in the face of an impending closure just 3 years ago," commented Capt. Tony Bogan, one of the founders of SSFFF and a member of United Boatmen.

While recent quota increases have led to improved access to the summer flounder fishery (i.e. – less restrictive regulations) in many states, clearly more changes will be required before the regulatory process can provide more equitable access for all recreational fishermen.

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Going forward, SSFFF is funding scientific studies to help address these inequities. The two most immediate changes needed to allow reasonable access to the flounder resource are the complete revamping of the Marine Recreational Fishing Statistics Survey and significant changes to the Sustainable Fisheries Act that will allow a degree of reasonable flexibility. Both are scientifically flawed and stand in the way of what many believe to be practical fisheries management regulations. Forcing anglers to target only spawning size females rather than retaining a cross section of sizes is a misguided regulatory strategy and one that needs legislative attention. Size limits that restrict shore bound anglers and those with limited incomes from any reasonable access to the summer flounder resource are also inequities that must be addressed.

“There is no simple solution to these problems, but rather the combined efforts of all must continue to be focused on multiple fronts. The recreational fishing industry and all saltwater anglers must continue to lobby their legislators for better science, more accurate MRFSS data, and most importantly, more equitable laws that manage our fisheries,” acknowledged Dave Arbeitman, also of the SSFFF Board of Directors.

In recognition of a difficult economy, SSFFF has decided to forgo a 2011 fundraising dinner. Board member Greg Hueth reports, “there is currently enough funding in the treasury to complete the studies that have been commissioned and with that in mind, we will not seek additional funding at this time. In the future, we will reach out to our supporters as needed. “

The Board would like to thank every one of its contributors and loyal supporters who have been so very generous over these past three years. Without those businesses, organizations and individuals from all parts of the country who tirelessly supported SSFFF, our opportunity to enjoy this resource would have most certainly been denied.

SSFFF continues to fund scientific research and independent data collection efforts that will most assuredly lead to a better understanding of fishery populations today and will allow it to carry out its mission of safeguarding summer flounder fishing access, not just for those who enjoy it, but also to ensure the survival of those who depend on it.

We thank you all for your continued support.

Board of Directors
Save The Summer Flounder Fishery Fund