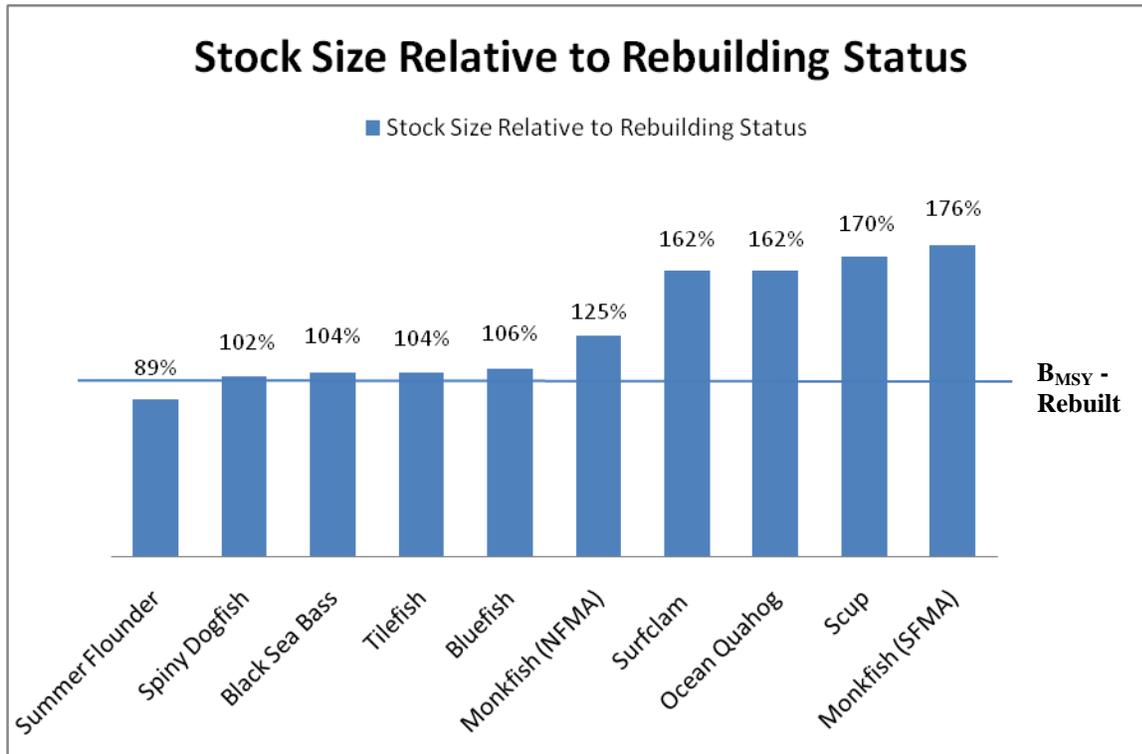


Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council Approaches Important Milestone: All Managed Fish Species Close to Healthy Levels

Summer flounder, one of the most important commercial and recreational fish species in the Mid-Atlantic states, **has recovered to 89% of healthy levels**, and scientists are optimistic that the population **will be fully rebuilt before the 2013 Congressional deadline**.¹ Once the summer flounder population is fully rebuilt, **all of the assessed species managed by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) will be at healthy levels**.² Progress to date is illustrated in the graph below:³



Just over twenty years ago, the summer flounder population had declined to less than 15 percent of healthy levels because of overfishing.⁴ Thanks to a rebuilding plan that has been in place since 2000, **the summer flounder population has rebounded**. This has enabled the MAFMC, which manages fish in federal ocean waters off the coasts of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, to **increase the quota for summer flounder by 7.35 million pounds to 29.48 million pounds for 2011**. This reflects an **86.9% increase from** a low of 15.77 million pounds in 2008.⁵

Rebounding fish populations create jobs, support coastal economies, repair damaged marine ecosystems, provide increased recreational fishing opportunities and bring back fresh, local seafood. Rebuilding depleted U.S. fish populations would at least triple the net economic value of many fisheries.⁶ In the Mid-Atlantic alone, rebuilding the summer flounder population would result in an additional \$28.9 million per year in direct economic benefits.⁷

Unfortunately, there are still 43 depleted fish populations across the nation that require rebuilding.⁸ Delaying rebuilding, as some in Congress are calling for, would deny other parts of the nation the same economic and environmental benefits that the Mid-Atlantic region enjoys. Efforts to weaken the law risk even greater damage to fish populations and the fishermen that depend on them, and increase the difficulty and cost of recovery. We must capitalize on successes like Mid-Atlantic summer flounder and finish the job of rebuilding valuable U.S. fish populations to enable the nation to enjoy the benefits of healthy seafood and sustainable fishing now and for future generations.

For more information, please contact:

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¹ National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), “FishWatch: Summer Flounder,” available at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/fishwatch/species/summer_flounder.htm.

² There are 13 species managed by the Mid-Atlantic Council. 10 are known not to be overfished and 3 are unknown. Of the 10 known, none are overfished and summer flounder is 89% rebuilt. Mid Atlantic Fisheries Management Council. http://www.mafmc.org/MAFMC_Stock_Status_CURRENT.pdf.

³ Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Council Meeting Materials, August 16-19, 2010, Philadelphia, PA, http://www.mafmc.org/meeting_materials/2010/August/briefing_book_2010-08.htm; see also National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), “2010 Status of U.S. Fisheries: Second Quarter Update,” June, 2010, www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/statusoffisheries/SOSmain.htm; cf MAFMC staff, personal communication, August 2010.

⁴ *Supra* note i.

⁵ Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, “Memorandum: Summer Flounder Management Measures 2011,” June 2010. <http://www.mafmc.org/fmp/current/SF-SC-BSB/Summer%20flounder/flkquota%202011%202010-06-30.pdf>.

⁶ U. R. Sumaila *et al.*, “Fish Economics: The Benefits of Rebuilding U.S. Ocean Fish Populations,” Fisheries Economics Research Unit, Fisheries Centre, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C. October 2005. http://feru.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/publications/Sumaila2005_RebuildingBenefitsUSA.pdf.

⁷ These figures are based on estimates of direct economic benefits made by comparing status quo management scenarios with scenarios where populations would have been rebuilt by 2007. Amounts are based on 2007 dollars. Dr. J. M. Gates, “Investing in Our Future: The Economic Case for Rebuilding Mid-Atlantic Fish Populations,” Pew Environment Group (2009). www.endoverfishing.org/resources/PEG_rebuilding.pdf.

⁸ National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), “2010 Status of U.S. Fisheries: Second Quarter Update,” June 2010. www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/statusoffisheries/SOSmain.htm.