



# Summer Flounder Fact Sheet

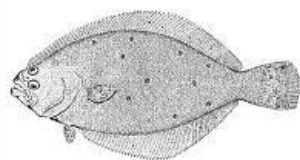


Image courtesy of the Northeast Fishery Science Center

## Basic Biology

Latin name: *Paralichthys dentatus*

Range: Inshore and offshore waters from Nova Scotia, Canada to the east coast of Florida; most abundant between Cape Cod, MA and Cape Fear, NC

Habitat: Muddy and sandy bottoms

Diet: Primarily fish and crustaceans

Age and growth: Reach sexual maturity between one and three years of age; lifespan is typically 10 to 15 years; maximum size may be as much as 26 lbs and 3 feet in length

## Sustainability

- Summer flounder have been managed by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) and the Mid Atlantic Fishery Management Council (MAFMC) for over 20 years. The population from North Carolina to Maine is managed as one stock.
- The summer flounder stock exhibited record low biomass levels in the early 1990s, then consistent increases throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s; the population is no longer overfished or experiencing overfishing and rebuilding continues.
- Management measures include commercial quotas, closed seasons in some states, minimum mesh size for trawls, minimum size limits for fish, recreational bag limits, and a moratorium on new entrants into fishery in NC.
- Commercial fishermen capture summer flounder with trawl nets in offshore areas during the winter and by pound nets in sounds and estuaries during the summer. Trawl nets can be very damaging to the sea floor and capture substantial amounts of bycatch. Fortunately, flounder inhabit muddy and sandy seafloors which are less affected by trawl nets and bycatch has been minimized with minimum mesh sizes for trawl nets and mandatory Turtle Excluder Devices in areas where interactions occur. Pound nets, large immobile traps made of mesh nets strung between vertical poles, have a minimal impact on the surrounding habitat and nearly all bycatch is released alive.

## Info for Chefs

- There are many different species of flounder and they have greatly varying levels of sustainability. It is very important that chefs know the specific species of flounder as well as the country or region of origin. A close relative of summer flounder, the *southern* flounder, is not currently sustainable.

## Info for Servers

- Adults migrate offshore into deep water during the winter and back inshore into estuaries during the summer, thus the name *summer* flounder.
- No commercial fishery exists in South Carolina; the closest are in North Carolina and Virginia.

Sources: Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission – [www.asmfmc.org](http://www.asmfmc.org)

North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries – [www.ncfisheries.net](http://www.ncfisheries.net)

University of Delaware, Graduate College of Marine Studies [www.ocean.udel.edu/kiosk/flounder.html](http://www.ocean.udel.edu/kiosk/flounder.html)

NOAA Fisheries – [www.fishwatch.noaa.gov](http://www.fishwatch.noaa.gov)