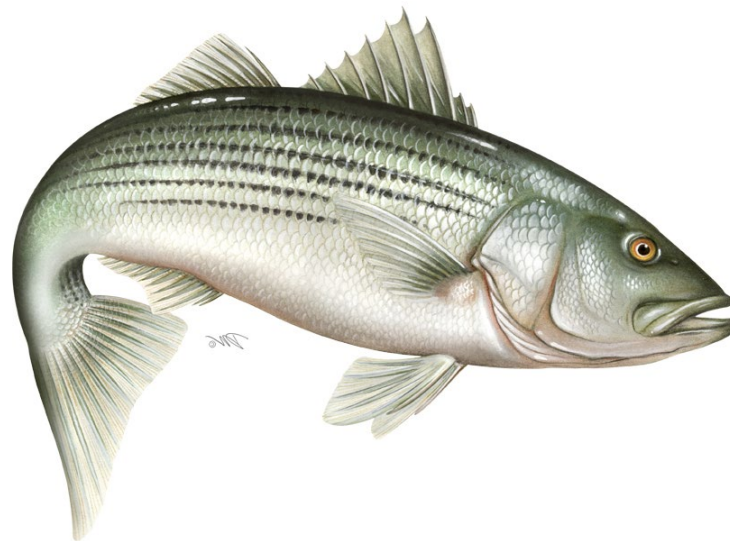




FMP Review for Atlantic Striped Bass 2023 Fishing Year



Striped Bass Management Board
August 6, 2024

Overview



1. Status of the Stock
2. Status of the FMP
3. Status of the Fishery
4. PRT Comments and Recommendations

Board action for consideration: Approve the 2024 FMP Review for fishing year 2023 and state compliance reports

Status of the Stock



- 2022 Update: Atlantic striped bass stock is overfished but not experiencing overfishing
- Data through 2021

	SSB mil lbs	<i>F</i>
2021	143	0.14
Threshold	188	0.20
Target	235	0.17

- **2024 Stock Assessment Update in progress**

Status of the FMP

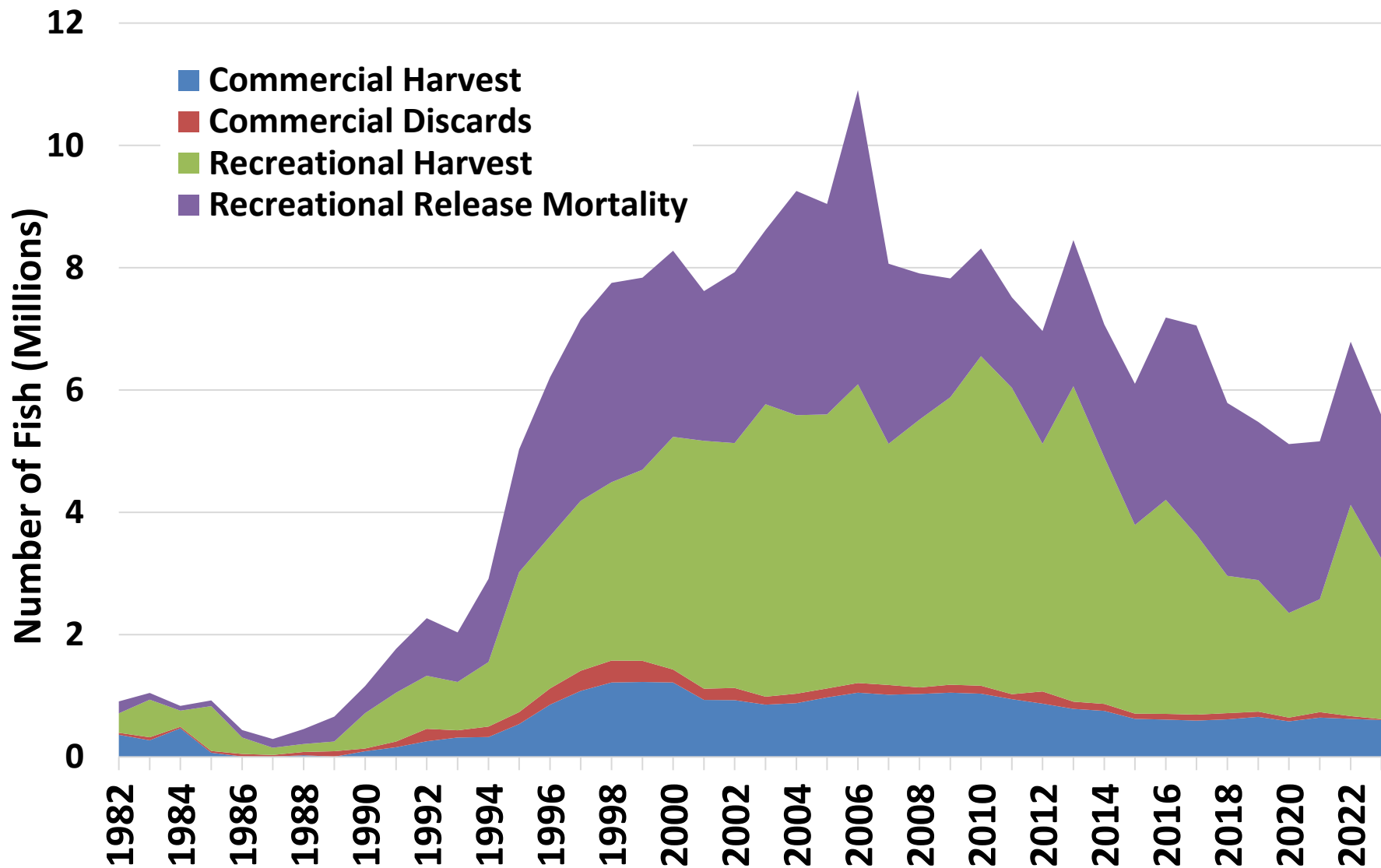


- Amendment 7 measures in place until **2023**
emergency action implemented to reduce harvest of the 2015 year class
- Emergency action approved May 2, 2023 and implemented by July 2, 2023
 - State implementation ranged from mid-May through July 2
- Emergency action replaced by Addendum II with required implementation by May 1, 2024

Status of the Fishery



Total striped bass removals by sector in numbers of fish



Status of the Fishery



- 2023 total removals = 5.6 million fish
- 18% decrease from 2022 removals
- Proportion of total removals in numbers of fish

Year	Commercial		Recreational	
	Harvest	Dead Discards	Harvest	Release Mortality
2020	11%	1%	33%	54%
2021	12%	2%	36%	50%
2022	9%	1%	51%	39%
2023	11%	<1%	47%	42%

Status of the Fishery



- Commercial Fishery in 2023
 - Harvest of 4.2 million lbs. (600,673 fish)
 - Similar to 2022 harvest level (2% decrease by weight)
- Commercial Quota Utilization in 2023
 - Ocean utilization of 74.5% (underutilization due to lack of availability in NC and no commercial fishing in four states)
 - States allowing harvest used 94-98% of quotas
 - Chesapeake Bay utilization of 84%
 - Quotas were not exceeded

Status of the Fishery



- Recreational Fishery in 2023
 - Harvest of 2.6 million fish (23.9 million lbs)
 - 24% decrease in harvest by number relative to 2022
 - Released alive 26.0 million fish → 2.3 million fish assumed to have died
 - 12% decrease in live releases from 2022
- Regions and Modes in 2023
 - Larger decrease in harvest and directed trips in the Ocean as compared to Chesapeake Bay
 - Private-shore harvest decreased similarly in both regions
 - Large for-hire harvest decrease in ocean, for-hire harvest increased in Chesapeake Bay

Status of the Fishery



- Harvest by wave (number of fish)

		Ocean Rec. Harvest	Ocean 2023 relative to 2022	Chesapeake Bay Rec. Harvest	Chesapeake Bay 2023 relative to 2022
2022	Wave 2	503,467		0	
2023	Wave 2	545,313	+8%	0	-
2022	Wave 3	515,812		166,832	
2023	Wave 3	430,324	-17%	170,386	+2%
2022	Wave 4	532,784		151,059	
2023	Wave 4	216,147	-59%	129,309	-14%
2022	Wave 5	452,936		256,964	
2023	Wave 5	145,039	-68%	66,684	-74%
2022	Wave 6	751,855		122,317	
2023	Wave 6	699,316	-7%	221,913	+81%

Status of the Fishery



- PRT notes several factors likely contributing to levels of commercial harvest and recreational catch/effort, including
 - Year class availability, particularly the 2015s and emergency action to reduce harvest
 - Angler behavior
 - Stock abundance
 - Nearshore availability

Amend. 7 Recruitment Trigger



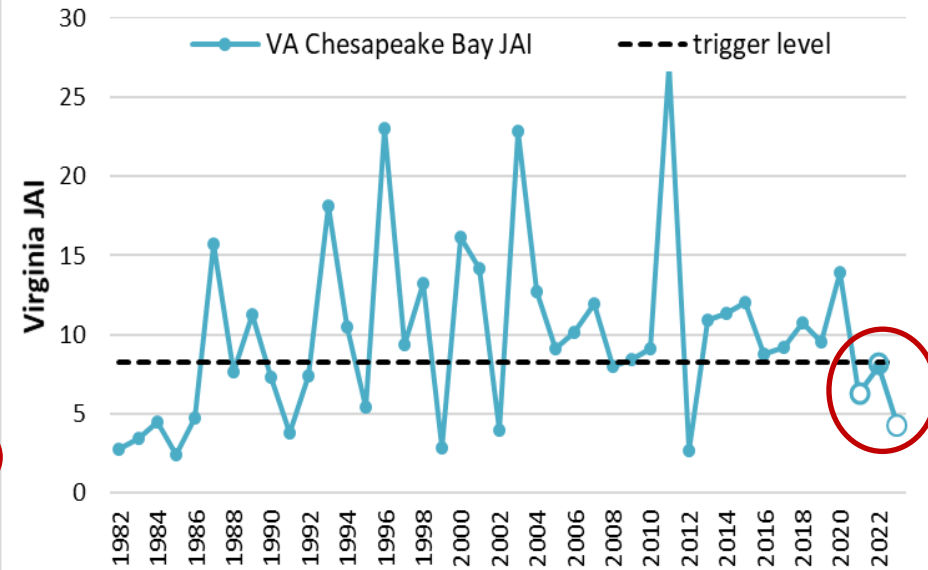
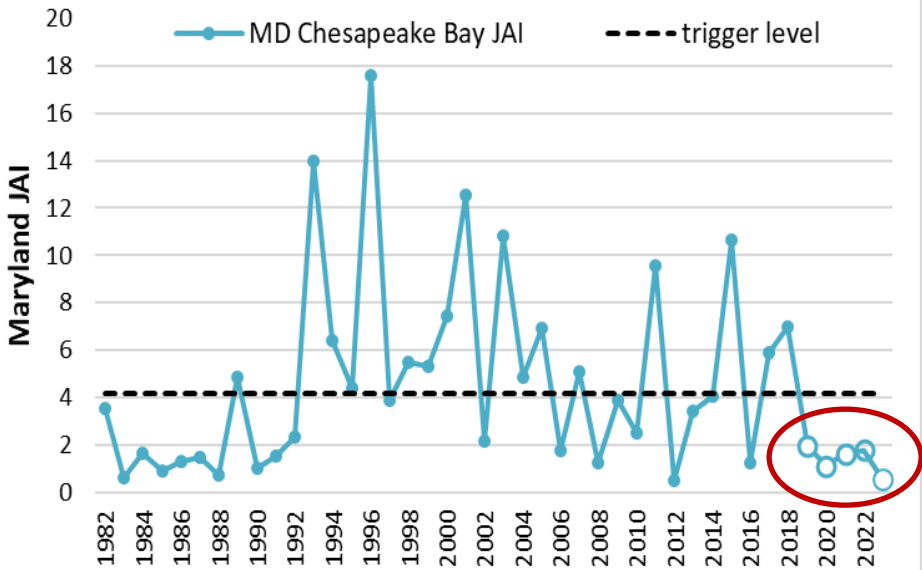
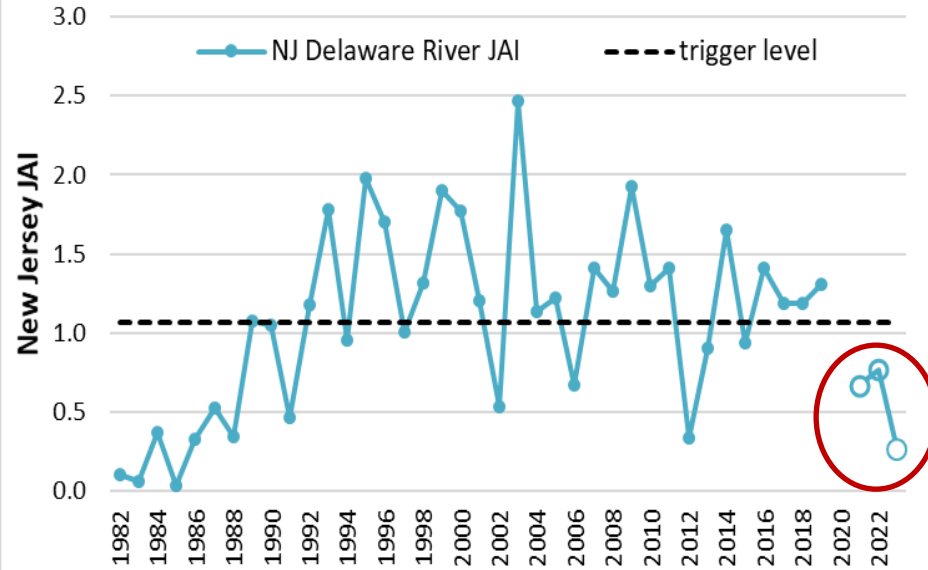
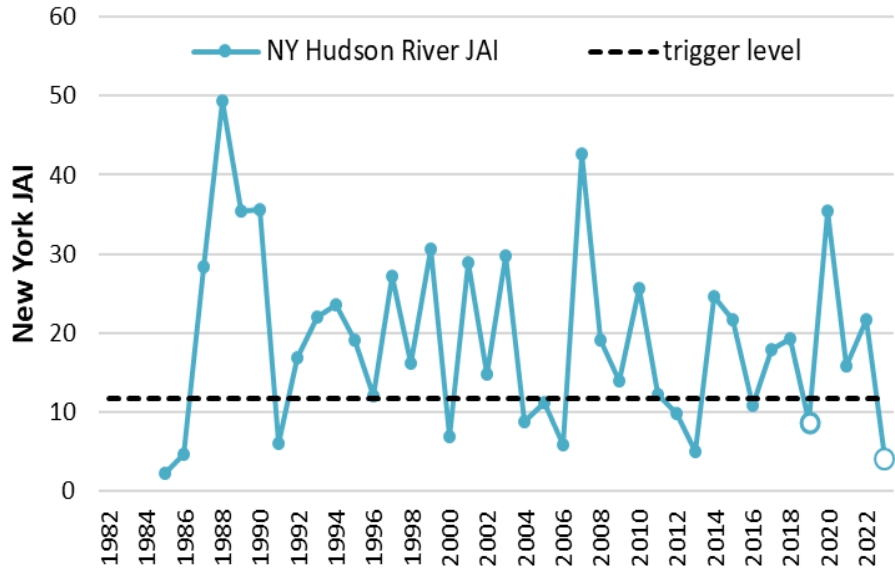
- IF any of the four JAIs used in the assessment (NY, NJ, MD, VA) is below 75% of all values from 1992-2006 (high recruitment period) for three consecutive years...
- THEN interim F reference points calculated using the low recruitment assumption will be implemented

Amend. 7 Recruitment Trigger



- Recruitment trigger tripped again this year
- Reviewed 2021, 2022, 2023 JAI values → New Jersey, Maryland, and Virginia trip the trigger
- 2024 stock assessment update will continue to use the low recruitment assumption to calculate reference points

Amend. 7 Recruitment Trigger



PRT Comments



In 2023, all states implemented a management and monitoring program consistent with the provisions of the FMP and the 2023 Emergency Action.

There are no *de minimis* requests.

PRT Comments



- PRT previously noted differences in regulatory language for the Amendment 7 gear restrictions (implementation by Jan 1, 2023)
 - DC does not specifically prohibit gaffing, but notes gaffing is not listed as a legal gear
 - Instead of “if caught on unapproved method of take must be returned immediately without unnecessary injury”, some states note anglers can only take or catch striped bass via methods/gear that are legally allowed in regulations
- Board did not express any concern during discussion of last year’s 2023 FMP Review

PRT Recommendations



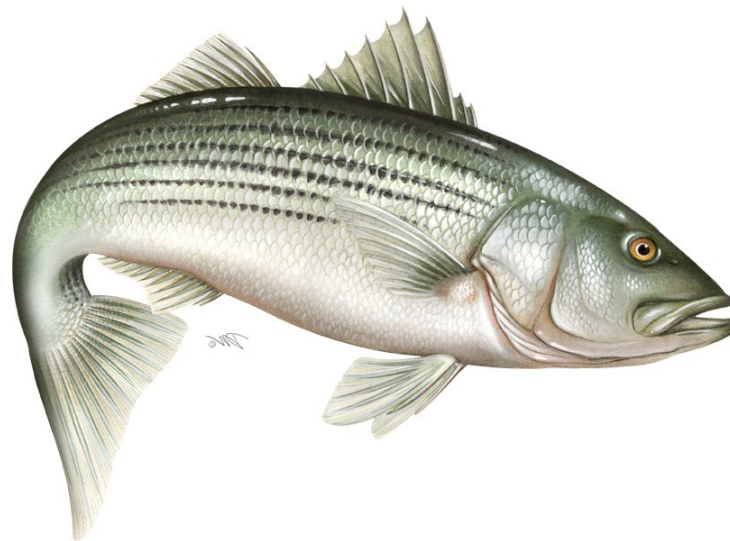
- Importance of commercial tag accounting; PRT recommends following up with states as needed on tag accounting
- PRT recommends the Board task the PRT with a review of the commercial tagging program
 - Review program components
 - Not necessarily intended to change program requirements, but review how programs are operating and identify issues states have encountered/resolved
 - Could include LEC input
 - Streamline state reporting (tagging reports vs. compliance reports)

PRT Comments



- PRT additional comment: New York spawning stock monitoring in Hudson River does not provide an index of relative abundance, which was identified as a high priority research recommendation at SAW 66

Questions?





Work Group on Recreational Release Mortality: Recommendations on Stock Assessment and Public Scoping



Striped Bass Management Board
August 6, 2024

Background



- Board Work Group established to discuss recreational release mortality (RRM)
 - Task 1. Review existing no-targeting closures, including effort, enforceability, etc.
 - Task 2. Review MA DMF study and other H&L studies to evaluate gear restrictions
 - Task 3: Identify stock assessment work to inform RRM discussion
 - Task 4. Consider public scoping on measures to address RRM

WG Members



- Chris Batsavage (NC, WG Chair)
- Nichola Meserve (MA)
- Marty Gary (NY)
- Adam Nowalsky (NJ)
- David Sikorski (MD)
- Mike Luisi (MD)
- Max Appelman (NOAA)

Timeline



2024	Step
May	WG tasks approved by Board; WG membership established
June 24 & July 17	WG meetings to primarily discuss stock assessment and public scoping (tasks 3-4)
Aug 6	WG initial recommendations to Board on stock assessment and public scoping (tasks 3-4); Board consideration of recommendations
Late Aug – early Oct	WG meetings to discuss no-targeting closures and gear restrictions (tasks 1-2) and revisit tasks 3-4 as needed; develop final WG report
October	Final Report and WG Recommendations to Board



TASK #3: STOCK ASSESSMENT WORK

Task #3 Stock Assessment



Task #3. Identify assessment sensitivity runs which may inform Board discussion around release mortality (e.g., how low would you have to reduce the release mortality rate in order to see a viable reduction in removals with the same level of effort?). Consider the tradeoff of reducing the release mortality rate vs. reducing the number of releases overall.

Task #3 Stock Assessment



- WG reviewed past TC work exploring the sensitivity of the assessment model to different RRM rates
- Past work valuable to understand how different constant RRM rates impact the *historical* time series
- Now, Board interest in understanding how actions to reduce RRM would impact the stock moving *forward*
- **WG recommends tasking the TC as follows during the ongoing 2024 stock assessment**
 - TC tasks to address tradeoff between reducing the release mortality rate vs. reducing the number of releases overall

Task #3 Stock Assessment



1. If a reduction is needed to achieve rebuilding, determine how low the release mortality rate would need to be to achieve that entire reduction through the release mortality rate alone. If the number of live releases is constant, what would the release mortality rate need to be to achieve the reduction?
2. If a reduction is needed to achieve rebuilding, determine the percent reduction in number of live releases needed to achieve the entire reduction through live releases alone. Using the current 9% release mortality rate, how many fewer live releases would there need to be to achieve the reduction?
 - *Illustrate tradeoff between reducing the RRM rate vs. reducing the number of live releases. Assume recreational harvest is constant. For commercial assumption, two iterations: constant comm. harvest and equal reduction for comm. harvest.*

Task #3 Stock Assessment



3. If a reduction is needed to achieve rebuilding, determine the percent reduction in number of live releases needed under the current 9% mortality rate, assuming there is an associated reduction in recreational harvest due to no-targeting closures.

- *TC determine how to best quantify the reduction in live releases from no-targeting closures, which depends on several assumptions.*
- *For commercial assumption, two iterations: constant comm. harvest and equal reduction for comm. harvest.*
- *WG recommends the TC comment on how potential reductions from no-targeting closures could vary depending on season, as catch varies through year and by region.*

Task #3 Stock Assessment



4. Identify the tradeoffs of implementing no-targeting closures at different times of the year with different assumed release mortality rates to help inform when/where implementing no-targeting closures would result in the highest reduction. Factors could include water temperature and salinity, with the assumption that the release mortality rate is higher when the water temperature is high and the salinity is low.

- *Reduction from no-targeting closure depends on several factors. Any guidance from the TC on the best use of no-targeting closures to achieve reductions would be helpful.*

Task #3 Stock Assessment



- **WG recommends tasking the TC as described to address during ongoing 2024 stock assessment**



TASK #4: PUBLIC SCOPING

Task #4 Public Scoping



Task #4. Consider public scoping on measures to address release mortality (e.g., online public survey ahead of the October Board meeting).

- Scenario of Board considering action via Board vote (i.e., no addendum process) if 2024 stock assessment indicates a rebuilding reduction is needed
- Public scoping would need to occur from mid-August through mid-September if the Board considered action at October 2024 Board meeting

Task #4 Public Scoping



- WG supports online survey approach to gather public input on complex issues around RRM
- WG concern that conducting the survey prior to October is not enough time to ensure the survey is well-developed
- This survey is an important opportunity to inform management beyond just the next stock assessment
- Additional time for survey development would be beneficial; WG members not trained in survey design
 - Consult with CESS members, and potentially external survey experts if needed, and Striped Bass AP for industry input

Task #4 Public Scoping



- **WG recommends the Board extend the timeline for a public survey on RRM to at least after the 2024 Annual Meeting**
 - Conduct survey shortly after 2024 Annual Meeting → maybe inform Board action later in 2024 (e.g., special Board meeting in November or December)
 - Conduct survey in 2025
- Board could still take action in 2024, if a reduction is needed, without the survey results
- States can also conduct outreach to their striped bass stakeholders prior to the October Board meeting
- Important to have time for input from CESS/survey experts and AP
- Need outreach strategy to disseminate survey to stakeholders



QUESTIONS



Progress Update and Board Guidance on 2024 Stock Assessment Update

Katie Drew, ASMFC

August 6, 2024

2024 Update Timeline



- June:** All data submitted
- July-August:** Initial model runs; SAS input as needed
- Sept 4-5:** TC-SAS meeting to discuss final model runs and calculate potential management measures if a reduction is needed to achieve rebuilding
- Sept:** TC-SAS develop final report and management options, if needed
- Week of **Oct 21:** Striped Bass Board meeting

Add II Board Action Provision



If an upcoming stock assessment prior to the rebuilding deadline (currently 2029) indicates the stock is not projected to rebuild by 2029 with a probability greater than or equal to 50%, the Board could respond via Board action where the Board could change management measures by voting to pass a motion at a Board meeting instead of developing an addendum or amendment (and different from the emergency action process).

Add II Board Action Provision



- 2024 Stock Assessment update presented at Annual Meeting in October
- If a reduction is needed to achieve rebuilding by 2029, TC would calculate new management options to present concurrently with assessment
- If a reduction is needed, TC could consider quota reductions for the commercial sector and changes to size-bag-season for recreational sector
 - Range of viable recreational options may be limited

Request for Guidance



- To ensure that the TC develops viable options for the Board, Staff is looking for guidance on the following questions
 1. How should any potential reduction be allocated across sectors?
 2. What types of recreational options should be considered?

Request for Guidance



1. How should any potential reduction be allocated across sectors?
 - E.g., equal percent reductions for all sectors, or should one sector take more or less of a reduction?

 - If the recreational sector can't achieve the required reduction exactly (i.e., any options overshoot or undershoot the required reduction), how should the difference be handled?

Request for Guidance



2. What types of recreational options should be considered?
 - No-targeting vs. no-harvest closures
 - Moving slot limit/size limit to protect the 2018 year-class for more years

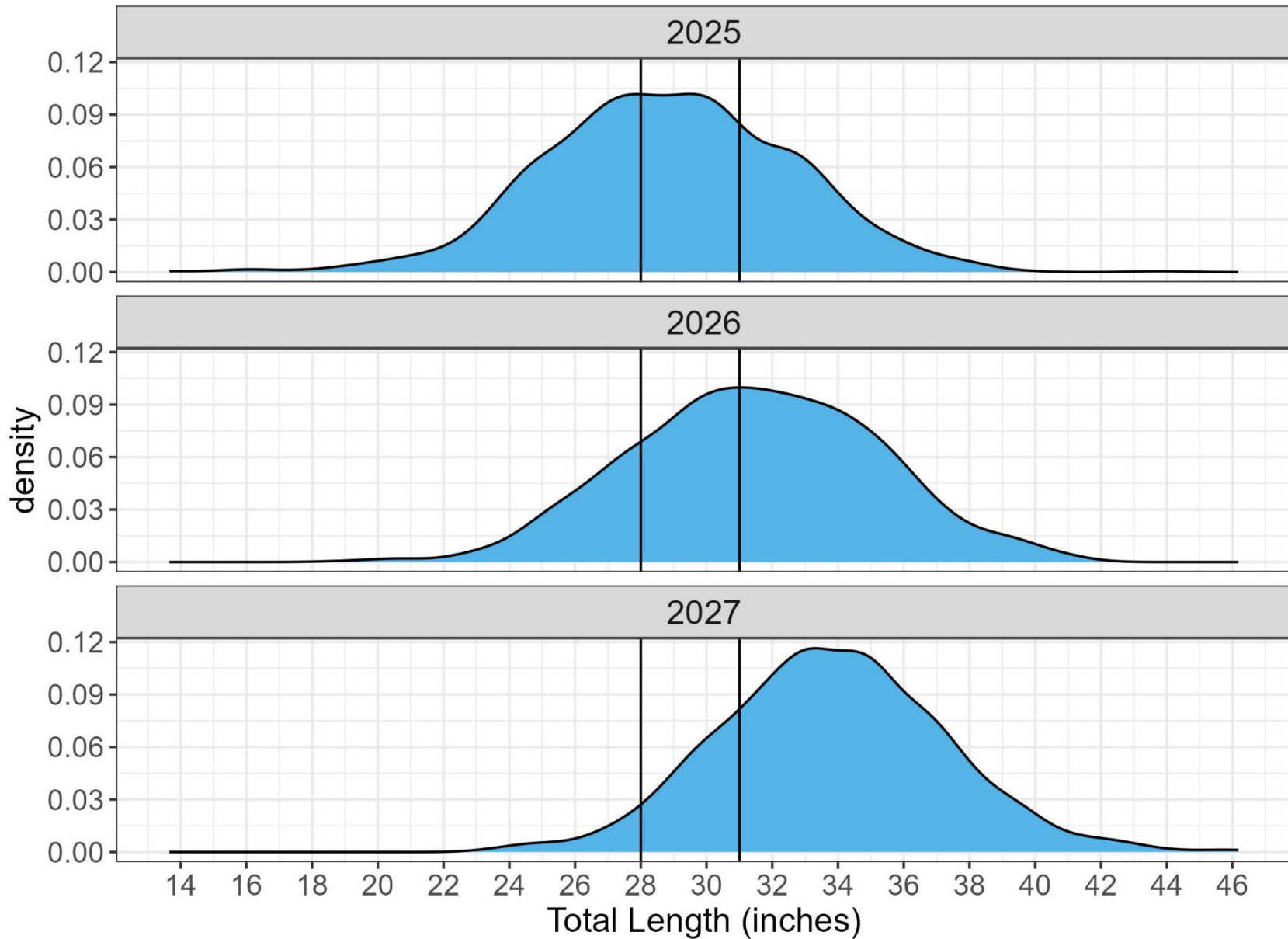


Questions/Guidance?



Extra Slides

2018 Year Class Length Dist.

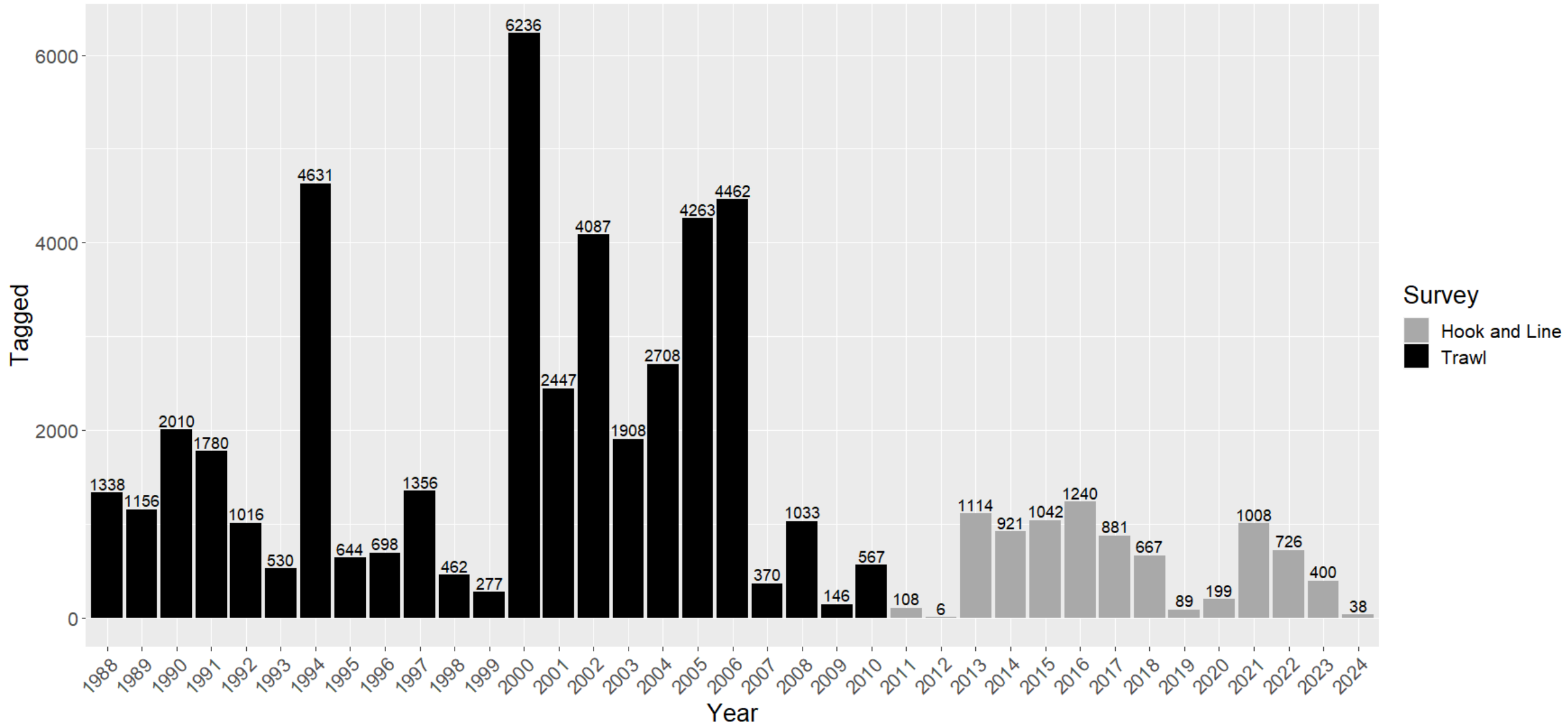


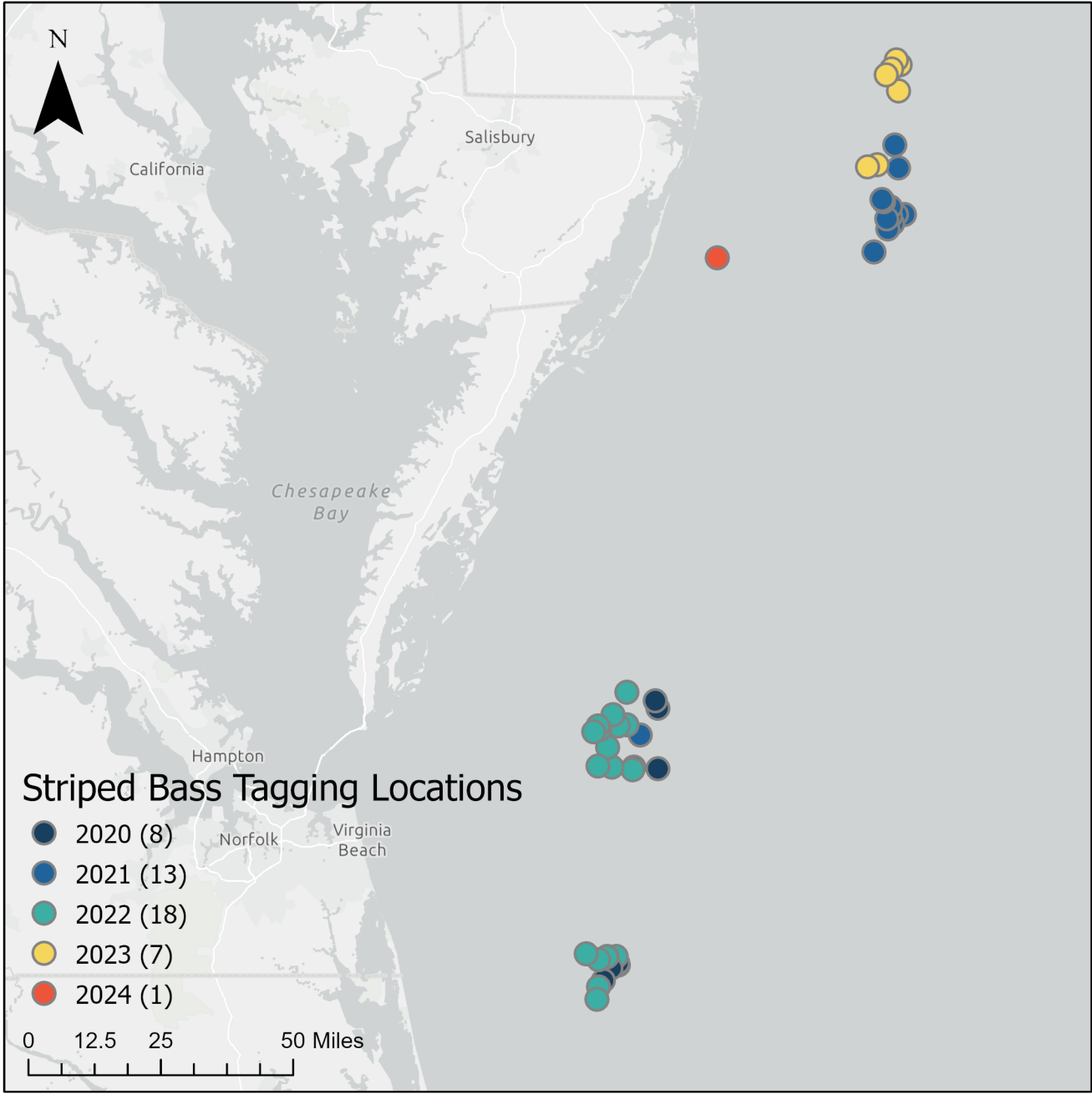
Striped Bass Cooperative Winter Tagging Cruise

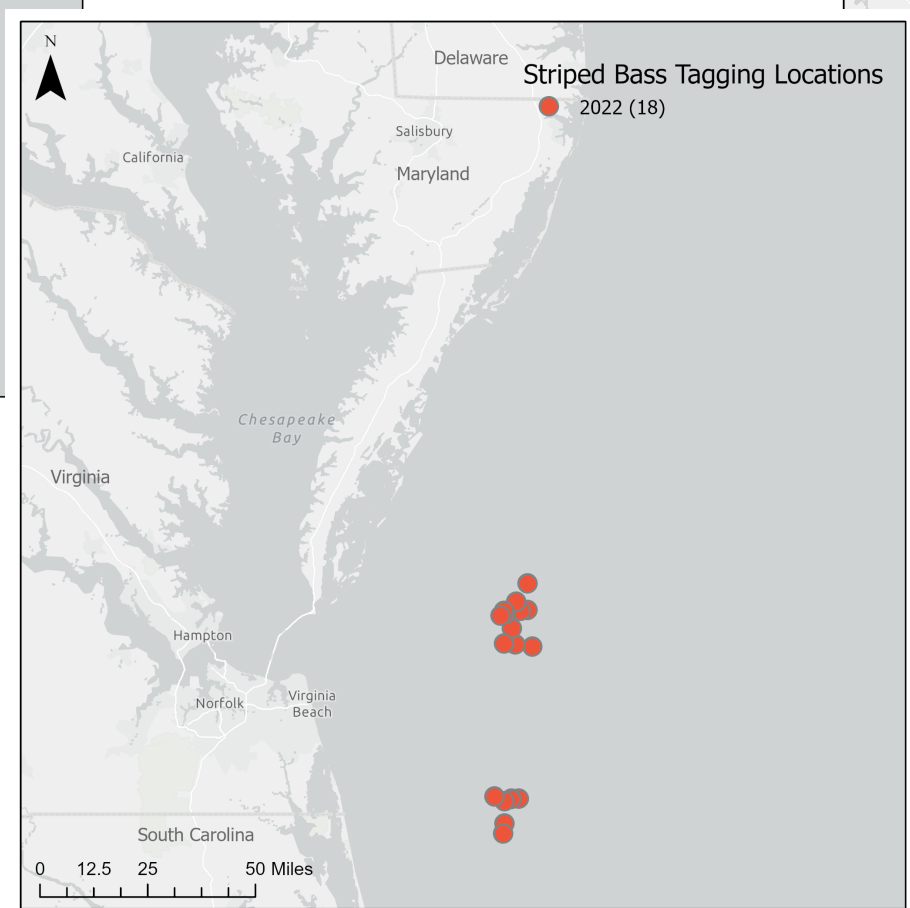
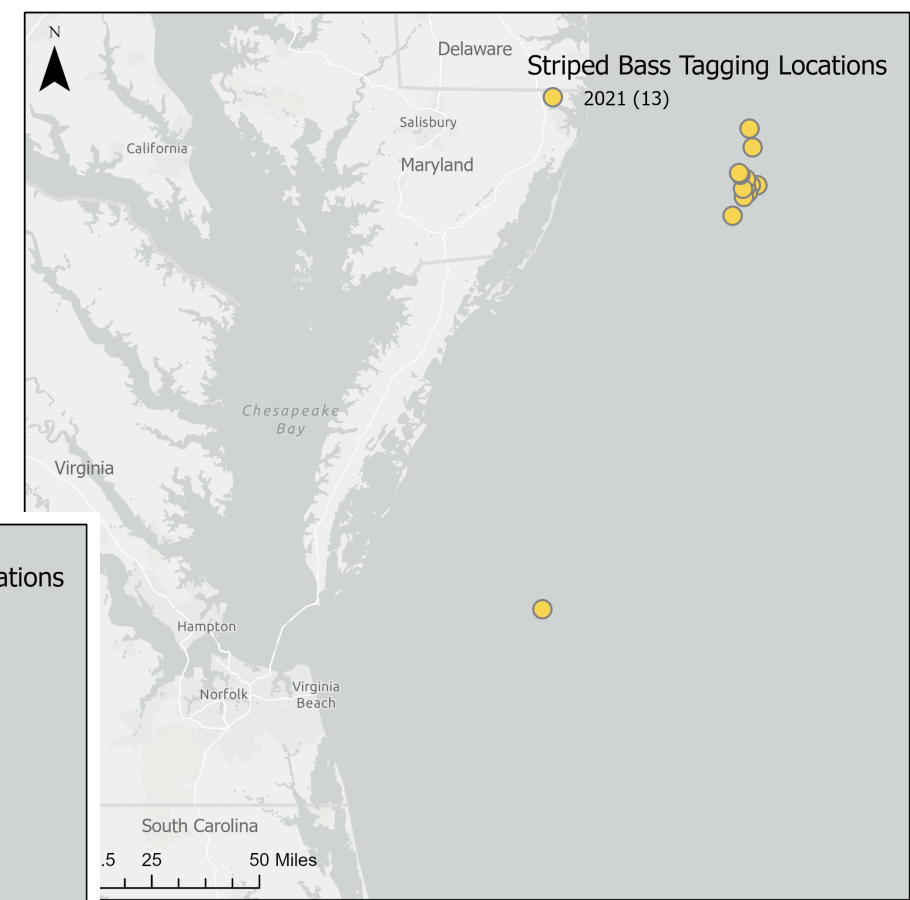
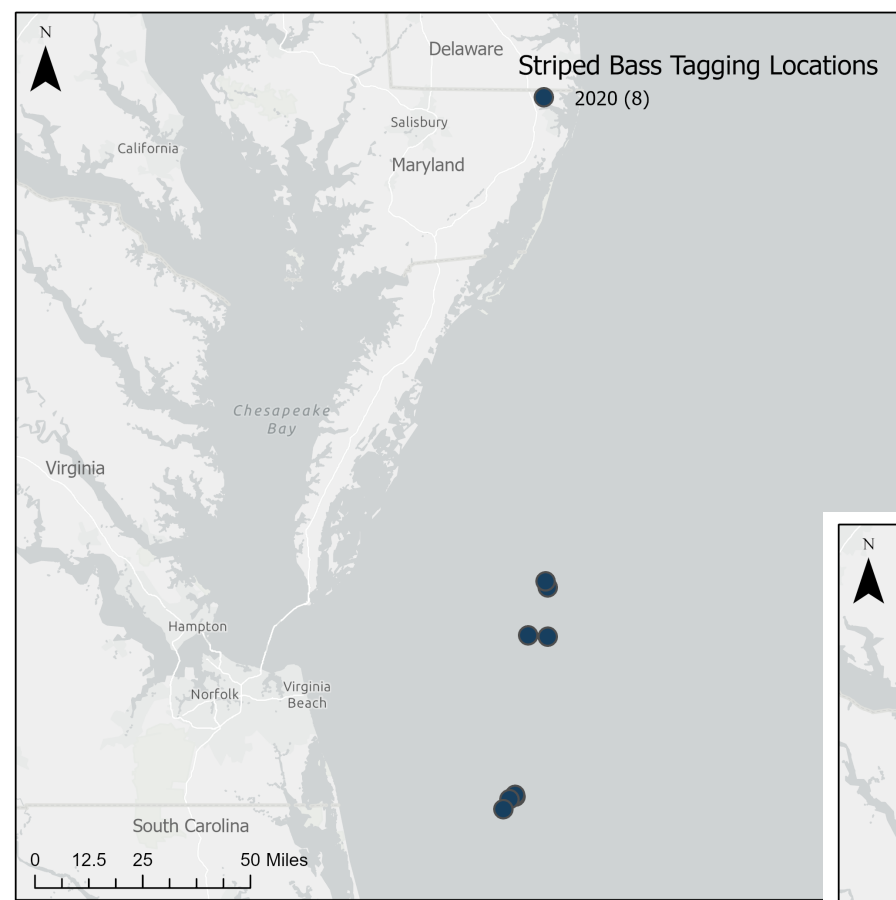


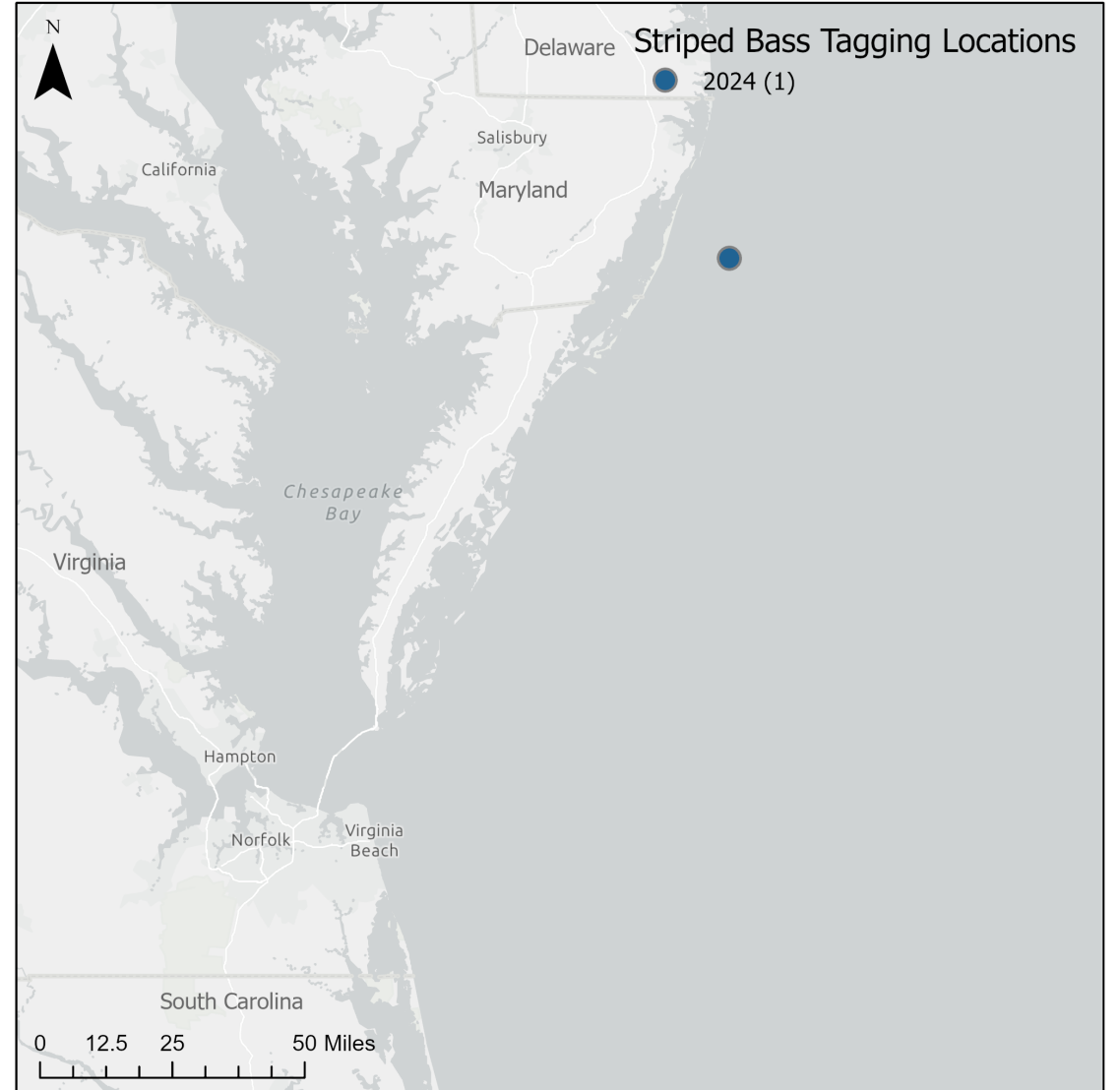
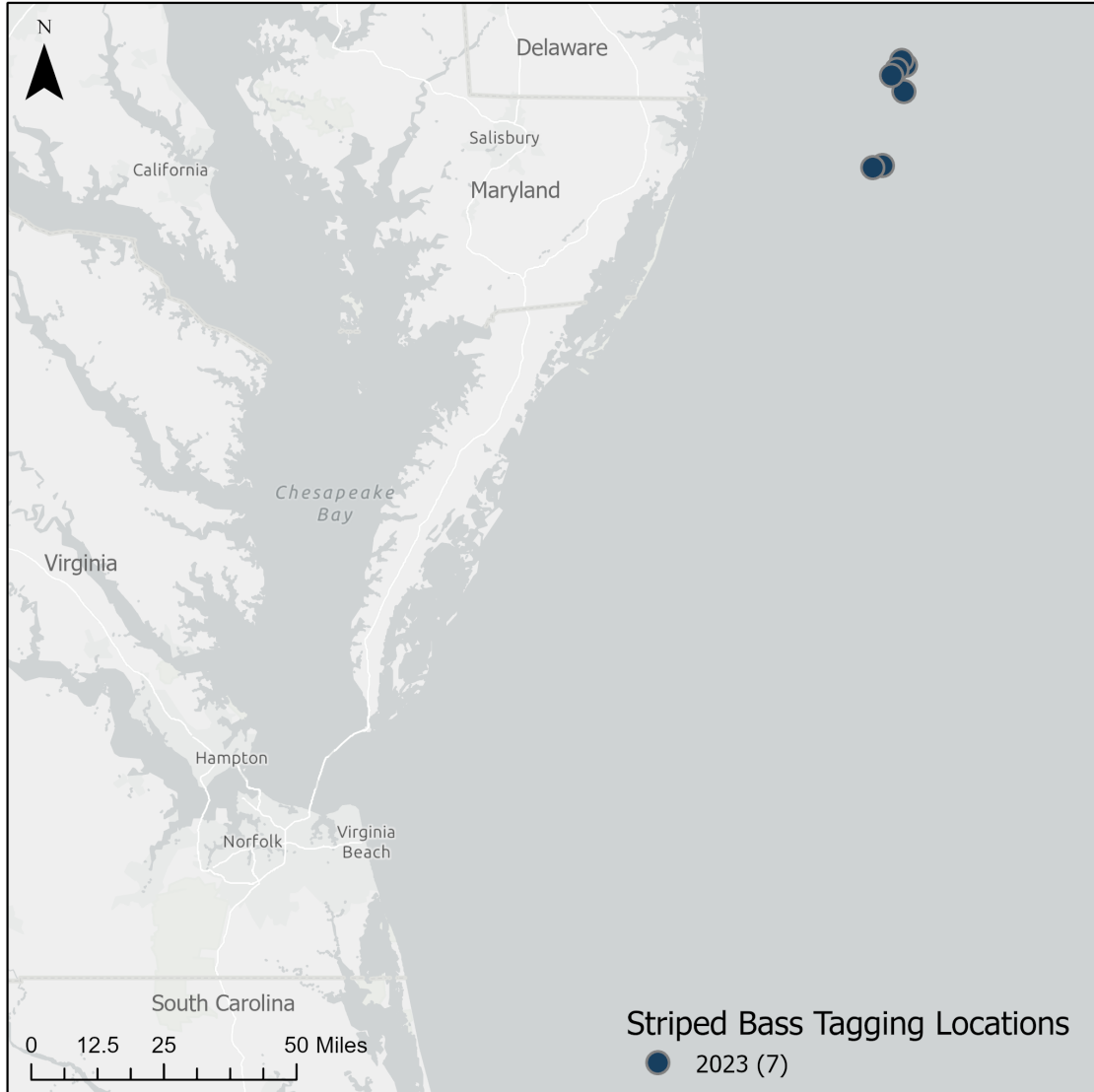
Signe VanDrunen, Maryland Fish and
Wildlife Conservation Office

ASMFC Tagged Striped Bass

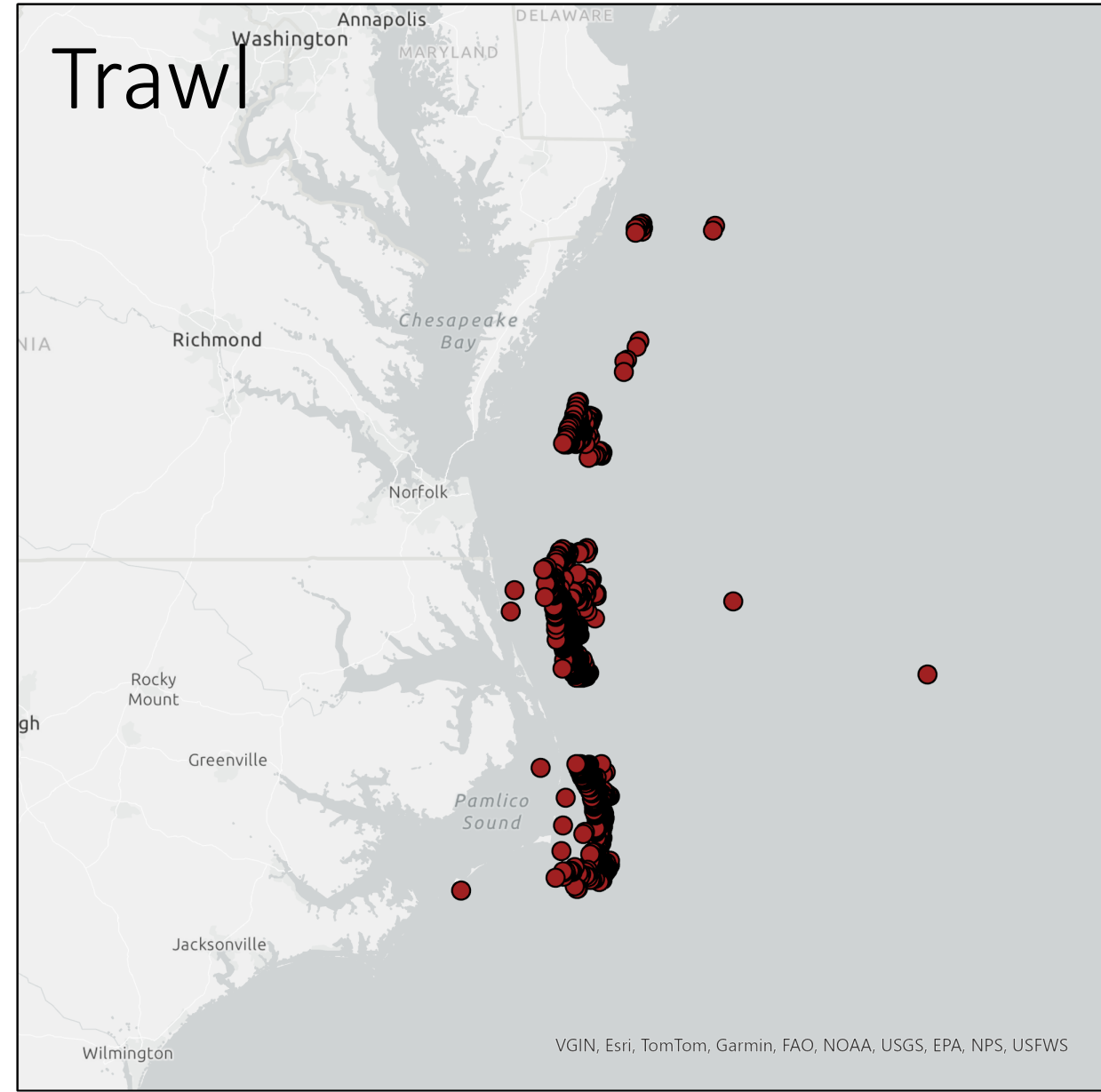
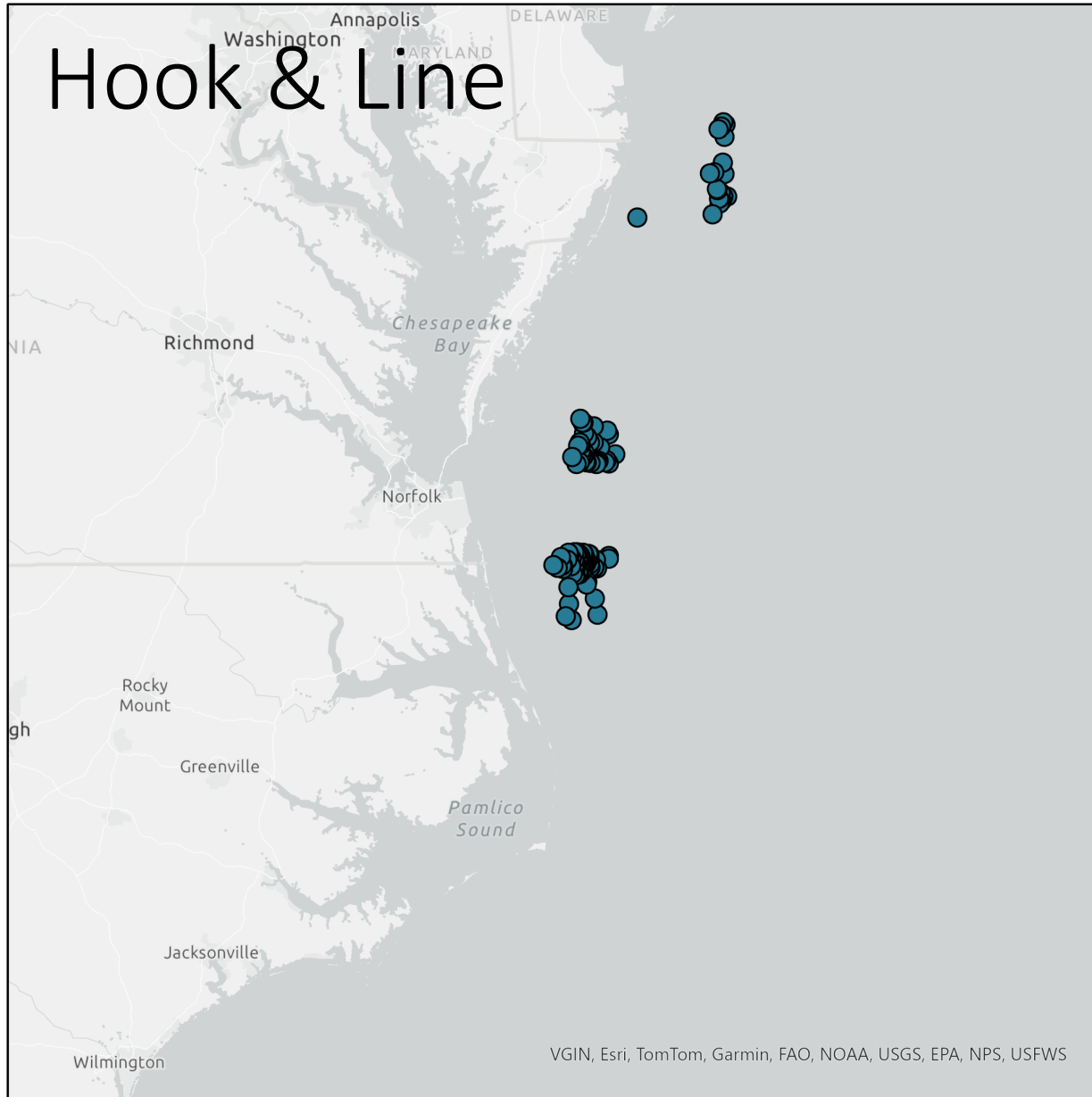








ASMFC Tag Locations by Survey



Funding and Cost Breakdown

Main cruise costs

Item	Cost
HSC Pins (Reward)	\$5,300.00
HSC Tags	\$3,700.00
HSC Office Supplies	\$780.00
Postage for Rewards	\$3,000.00
HSC FEDEX of Tags to Cooperators	\$300.00
	\$13,080.00
STB Hats & Pins (Rewards)	\$2,580.00
STB Tags	\$6,600.00
STB Office Supplies	\$355.00
STB Postage for Rewards	\$2,200.00
STB FEDEX of Tags to Cooperators	\$88.00
	\$11,823.00
Sturgeon Program (Postage, Rewards, Tags)	\$2,000.00
	\$2,000.00
STB Winter Tagging (Boat Cost)	\$24,700.00
STB Winter Tagging (Fuel Cost)	\$6,600.00
STB Winter Tagging (Travel Cost for Employees)	\$3,000.00
STB Winter Tagging (Supplies & Tags)	\$1,500.00
TOTAL	\$35,800.00
Pathways Student (MDFWCO)	\$8,500.00
TOTAL	\$8,500.00
TOTAL BUDGET FOR ACFCMA PROJECTS	\$71,203.00
ACFCMA FUNDS RECEIVED 2024	\$35,000.00
Permanent Employee Salary	\$50,000.00